FROM THE CREATOR OF *GUNSMITH CATS*

KENICHI SONODA

CANNON GOD EXAXXION

STAGE 3

CANNON GOD EXAXXION

STORY AND ART BY

KENICHI SONODA

TRANSLATION BY

DANA LEWIS & ADAM WARREN

LETTERING AND TOUCH-UP

SUSIE LEE with TOM 2K

3

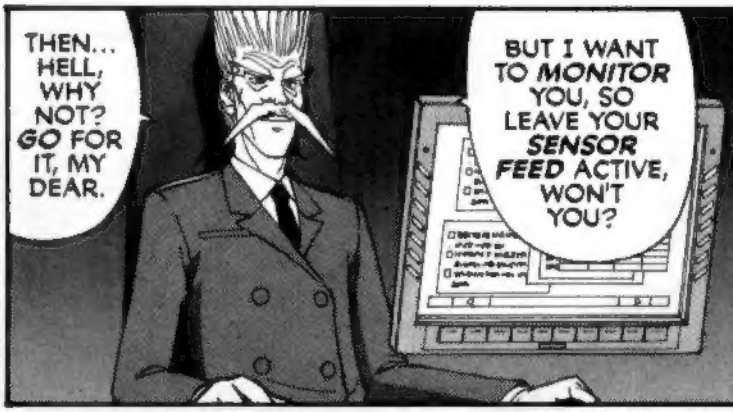
STAGE 3

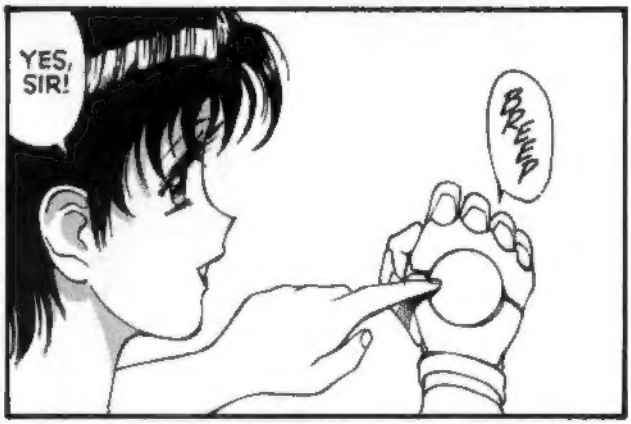
DARK HORSE MANGA™

3.1
CANNON GOD EXAXXION: STAGE 3.1

SHLUPP
SNAPP
AMPP
HUH ...?
WE'RE JUST BARELY PICKING UP YOUR SIGNAL, REIKO.
CAN YOU READ ME, MASTER HOSUKE ...?
VREEP

BUT IF YOU'RE TRANSMIT-TING ON AN OPEN FREQUENCY, I ASSUME THAT MEANS YOU'RE READY TO KICK ASS, EH?
AKANE'S IN DANGER, SIR.
I HAVE TO GET HER OUT OF HERE, RIGHT NOW, OR...

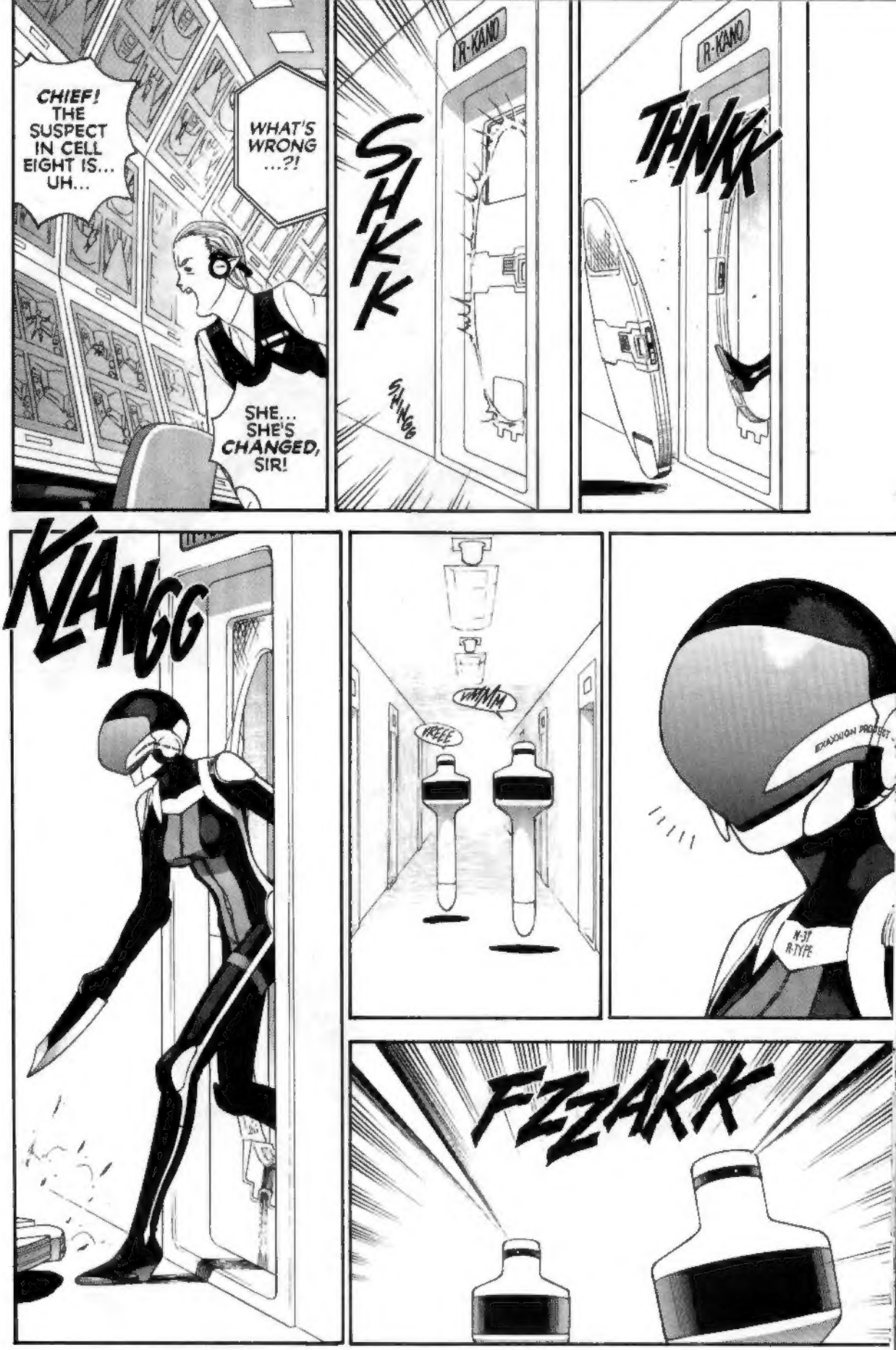

THEN... HELL, WHY NOT? GO FOR IT, MY DEAR.
BUT I WANT TO MONITOR YOU, SO LEAVE YOUR SENSOR FEED ACTIVE, WON'T YOU?


YES, SIR!
BEEP

VWIP

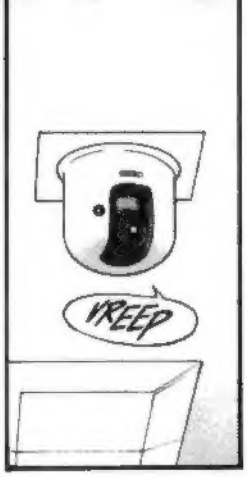
BIO-HOSU

SHNK


CHIEF! THE SUSPECT IN CELL EIGHT IS... UH...
WHAT'S WRONG ...?!
SHE... SHE'S CHANGED, SIR!
SHKK
SHINGG
R-KAN0
THNKK
R-KAN0
KLANGG
HMMM
FFEEE
EXADUCTION PROJECT
X-3T R-TYPE
FZZAKK

VORPP
TSK! BAD ROBOTS!
WSHINGG
GCHOK
CHINKK

WSSSHHH


VREEP

WHAT THE HELL *IS* THAT...?!

ATTENTION, *ALL FLOORS!* I'M DECLARING A *LEVEL-TWO ALERT!* A DETENTION SUBJECT HAS *ESCAPED!*
LASERS WON'T WORK ON HER! USE *KINETIC* WEAPONS!

WHAMM

BRRTTT

ESHH

THAPP

THAPP

THAPP

SPANG

SPAK SPAK

SPAK SPAK

SHRAKK

GYEEK!
AKANE ...!
WUSHH

IT'S JUST ME, DEAR.
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE... SHALL WE? ❤
KCHAK

AUNTIE... R-REIKO ...?
BUT... THAT SUIT...

WHIP

EEP!

WE'LL JUST GO THROUGH THE *WALL*, I THINK...

SHRINGG

HMPH. *WELL.*

SHRINGG

HOW... ANNOY-ING!

THE WALLS AND FLOOR SEEM TO BE *ARMORED.*

PERHAPS THE WHOLE BUILDING IS A *HARDENED SHELTER*, THEN...?

=sighh= WE'LL HAVE TO USE THE *CORRIDORS*, AFTER ALL.

AKANE! STAY *VERY* CLOSE TO ME, DEAR.

Y-YES, *MA'AM!*

D-
DON'T
MOVE!
A-HIN
!
PUT
YOUR
H-
HANDS
UP,
SLOWLY
...!
OR I'LL
SHOOT!
UM...
R-
REALLY
...!
HINO
WHSHH?

AAA!
CHUKK
AH...
SORRY,
MISS.
VWIPP
OH...
N-
NO...
FMPP

AAHH!! P-PLEASE DON'T KILL ME...!
POOR THING ...!
AH... AAH ?!
!!
EW/T
SSCHOK
KTHINKK SKRASSH
WH/T
SSCHOK
AH TH- THANK YOU..
LET'S GO, AKANE.
UM. RIGHT.

I'VE OVER-RIDDEN THE ELEVATOR CONTROLS, DEAR.
WE'LL CANCEL ALL THE STOPS AND GO STRAIGHT DOWN TO--
PSSHHTT
M-37
K TYPE

KSHOOM
KSHOOM
AH, LADDIE... REIKO JUST TOOK A SLUG FROM A DRONE TROOPER'S SINGLE-GAUGE...
WHAT? THEY SHOT MOM?!
EXAXXION
CANNON

BUT SHE AIN'T DEAD *YET,* MY BOY!

WITH HER *BATTLESUIT* ON, THE IMPACT WOULD'VE BEEN LIKE TAKING A *HARD PUNCH!* FROM A *HEAVYWEIGHT PRIZEFIGHTER,* MIND YOU...

HOICHI! IT'S UP TO YOU TO SAVE REIKO!

OH, *YEAH?* HOW'M I SUPPOSED TO DO *THAT,* GRANDPA?

USE YOUR 460mm CANNON TO *SHOOT OUT* PART OF THE BUILDING SHE'S IN!

IF WE CAN JUST CLEAR HER AN ESCAPE ROUTE, *REIKO* WILL DO THE REST!

BUT... WHAT IF I HIT *MOM...?*

AT THIS RANGE, EXAXXION'S CANNONS ARE ACCURATE TO WITHIN TEN CENTIMETERS!

WE'VE GOT HER PINPOINTED, LADDIE...I'M FEEDING THE TARGETING DATA TO ISAKA RIGHT NOW.

FWOOSH

SPLRSSHH

EVERY SECOND COUNTS, BOY! LOCK ON AND FIRE!

GOUGHA!

OH, NO... AUNTIE REIKO --?!

HUHH HAHH

HGKK...

UPLINK-ING TO S-GPS SIGNAL FEED...

...COORDI-NATES NOW LOCKED IN!

MASTER HOICHI... THE TRIGGER, IF YOU PLEASE?

KCHUNGG

*S(UPER)-GPS: A HIGHER-RESOLUTION VERSION OF THE OLDER ***GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM*** SATELLITE NETWORK

WHUPP WHUPP WHUPP WHUPP
JA2307
TV

KRRGGA
WHCHANGG
BOMF
KSHOOM
SKRANGG
KRNCH
WHCHANGG
WHOOOSH

WHOOSH

WE'RE TRACKING *TWO ROUNDS--*

COME IN, HQ! THE ROBOT'S FIRED ONE OF ITS *CANNONS!*

--INBOUND TOWARD *TOKYO!*

THE PROJECTILES' TRAJECTORIES ARE TARGETING SHINJUKU...NO! THE *RIOFALD ARCOLOGY!*

GIVE ME A PRECISE *IMPACT POINT!*

RUNNING CALCULA-TIONS...

GOT IT!

WHERE ...?

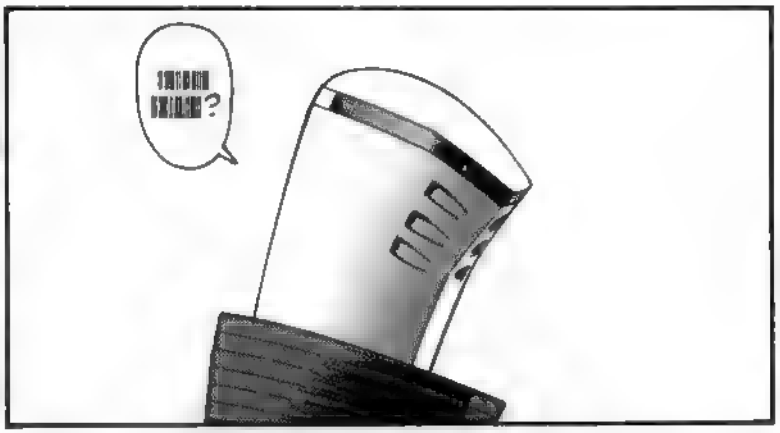
RIOFALD ARCOLOGY, *SOUTH BLOCK...*

...THE *PUBLIC SECURITY CENTER,* BUILDING FOUR!

TIME TO IMPACT... *47 SECONDS!*

DISARM IMMEDIATELY.
AUTHORIZED TO KILL NOW, RESUSCITATE LATER.
EEK ...!
SECOND REQUEST-- DISARM IMMEDIATELY, OR I KILL AKANE HINO.
BUH... BATTLE... MODE...
HFF
HAHH
HFF
...OFF!
PSHNKK
=HNFN=
WHIP

VREEED
A-7
VREEED


[illegible]?

INBOUND HERE?!
IN TEN...NO, SEVEN SECONDS?
BOOST DEFENSE SHIELDS TO FULL POWER! NOW!

WHKOOM
HUH? WHOA!
WE'RE FINE, DEAR! DON'T PANIC!
WHKOOM
A SECOND HIT--?
GET ME A DAMAGE REPORT!
Y-YES, SIR!

SO... WAS IT A *HIT?*

EXACTLY ON TARGET, MASTER HOICHI. CHECK THE LOWER RIGHT-HAND MONITOR...

BOTH ROUNDS HIT THE BUILDING HOUSING YOUR MOTHER AND MISS AKANE.

OH, YEAH? *JEEZ...* SO, IS EVERY-THING, Y'KNOW, *OKAY ...?*

OH, *YES*. THE BUILDING IS *COLLAPSING*, JUST AS PLANNED.

WHAAT --?!

WHRRMM

SKRAK

RMBB RMBB

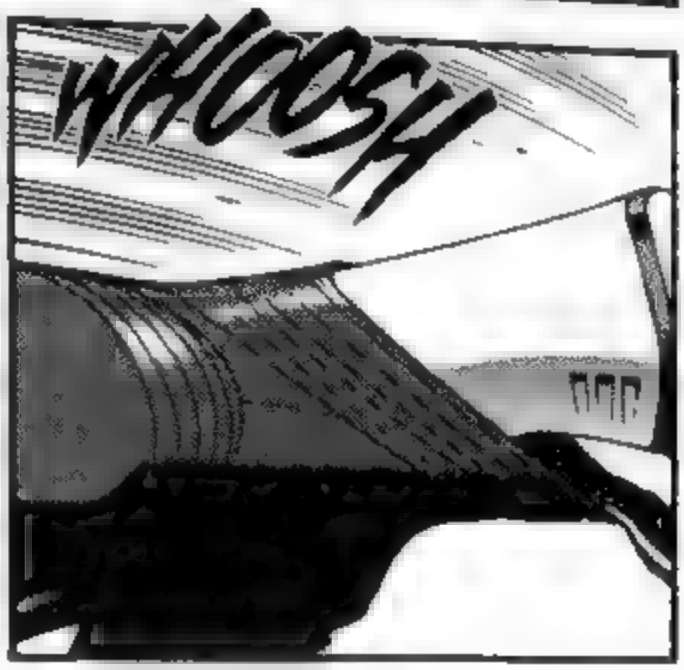
AMBB RI BB

BATTLE MODE ON!
FSHNKK

SKREEENK
KRAK

FWAP

THNKK


WHOOSH

KRANG
WH-WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING...?
THE BUILD-ING'S... TILTING?!
RMBB RMBB
RRMMBB
?!
AKANE!
THAPP
EEK!
OH! AUNTIE REIKO ...?
ARE YOU OKAY...? I MEAN, THAT THING SHOT YOU...
DON'T WORRY... I HAVE MEDICAL NANO-MACHINE IMPLANTS, YOU SEE.
NOW... IT'S TIME TO GO, DEAR!
M-37 R-TYPE

KSHOOOSH
LET'S MAKE OUR ESCAPE, SHALL WE?
WHAT'S HAPPENED UP THERE?
I CAN'T TELL, SIR! I'VE LOST ALL DATA FEEDS FROM THE ELEVENTH FLOOR ON UP...!
WERE WE SHELLED? THE VIBRATION DIDN'T FEEL THAT SEVERE, BUT...
INERTIA CONTROL DAMPENED THE IMPACT, SIR!
THE SECURITY SHUTTERS HAVE CLOSED ON EVERY FLOOR ABOVE FIVE!
GET ME SOMEONE UP-STAIRS!
I CAN'T, SIR...! WE'RE EXPERIENCING RED-LEVEL MAGNETIC INTERFERENCE!
ALL COMMUNICATIONS ARE OUT UNTIL WE RUN A DEMAG SWEEP ON THE BUILDING...!
THEN GET US A DATA FEED FROM OUTSIDE! USE A LAND LINE!
YES, SIR!
DAMN IT!
WHAT'S GOING ON--?

KTHOOM
SPARK
RMBBB
AAAA!
RMBBBBB
WE'RE GOING OVER--!
GET OFF ME, YOU FOOL!
CONTROL ROOM! COME IN CONTROL
DIVERT ALL TERMINAL DRONES AND BARUCHAD'D TO RESCUE OPERATIONS!
Y-YES, SIR!
HURRY! THIS WAY!

SO, DID WE PULL IT OFF?
KSHOOM KSHOOM KSHOOM
WE DID INDEED, MASTER HOICHI. THE BUILDING'S DOWN... THEY'RE HOME FREE, NOW.
HUH? WE HAVE TO GO ALL THE WAY DOWN FROM HERE...?
YES, DEAR.
FWAP
HAH!! TAKE THAT, SUCKERS! UP YOURS!
BUT DON'T WORRY, AKANE...I CAN GLIDE, YOU SEE.
VWIPP VWIPP
OH...!
FWSSH FWSSH

HOLD ON TIGHT...
B- BUT...
FWOOOSH
EEEK! WE'RE GONNA DIEEE!

AIEE!
WSSSHH
WHOA ...!
OW!
OH! I'M SORRY, AKANE! DID I HURT YOU...?
HOSUKE
N...NO. M-MY LEG... SOMETHING HIT ME! BROKEN GLASS, MAYBE...?

WHISH!

AH... DOCTOR RYA'AM!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SIR...?

FINE. JUST FINE.

SO... OUR SUBJECTS ESCAPED.

KCHAK

I'M ALERTING ALL MOBILE UNITS, SIR! WE'LL FIND THEM!

CARRY ON, CAPTAIN.

KCHIK

I SHAN'T HOLD MY BREATH, HOW-EVER.

BUT AT LEAST I MANAGED TO PUT OUR BACKUP PLAN INTO OPERATION... HMM?

THERE'S NOT ENOUGH *UPDRAFT* TO KEEP US ALOFT...I'LL HAVE TO LAND.
WHAT? N-*NO WAY!* THEY'LL *CATCH* US...!
OH, THEY'D CATCH US *ANYWAY,* IF WE KEPT FLYING AT THIS *LOW SPEED.*
THAPP
UM...WHAT *NOW,* AUNTIE REIKO...? THEY *HAVE* TO KNOW THAT WE LANDED HERE...!
OF *COURSE,* DEAR.
VWIPP
ONE OF THEIR *AERIAL DRONES* IS CLOSING IN ON US *RIGHT NOW...!*

B-BUT THEN... THEY'LL *KILL* US...!

BTAMM

WE'LL BE *JUST FINE,* AKANE.

WHISH

TARGET ACQUIRED... NOW UPLOADING COORDINATES.

ROOF SECURED. DOOR TOO SMALL FOR ACCESS. REQUESTING GROUND UNIT BACKUP.

THEY'RE *SUR-ROUNDED,* SIR.

REIKO JUST LANDED THEM ON A ROOFTOP IN *NAKANO.*

HMM... SAY, *SIERRA,* SWEETIE...

WHERE'S *HOICHI* NOW?

FOUR KILOMETERS OFFSHORE OF *KAWASAKI,* SIR.

HOICHI, MY BOY! THE RIOFALDIANS CAN STILL GET TO REIKO AND AKANE!
YOU HAVE TO GO RESCUE THEM DIRECTLY, USING EXAXXION!
WHAAAT?
YOU WANT ME TO GO ASHORE IN TOKYO, GRANDPA? BUT...I'LL SMASH HALF THE CITY TO BITS...!
SO?! WHAT THE HELL, LADDIE! YOU'RE A MAN, AIN'T YA? WHAT RED-BLOODED GUY WOULDN'T WANT TO CRUSH A CITY OR TWO?
BESIDES, ONCE YOU REACH THE RIOFALD ARCOLOGY, IT'S ALL THEIR PROPERTY, ANYWAY.
HEH, HEH...
BAM
GO RESCUE THE LADIES, AND IT'S ALL YOURS TO STAMP FLAT!
4096
ANNON
12/21

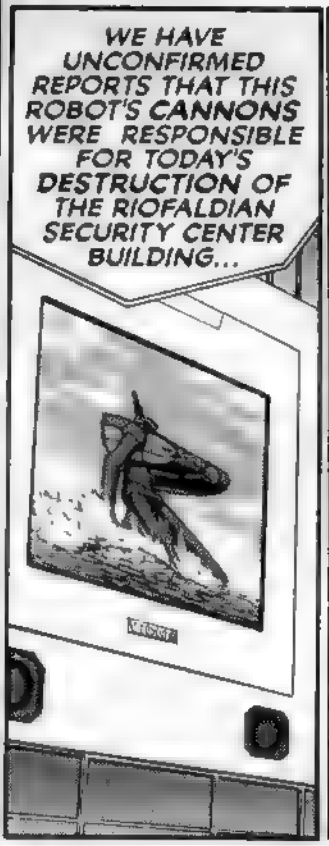
TO BE CONTINUED...!

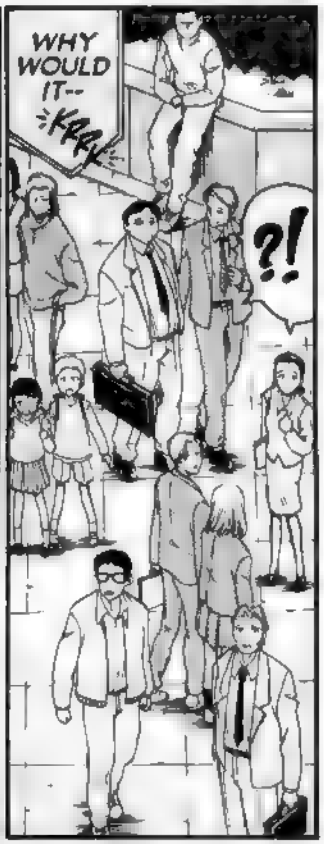
3.2
CANNON BOY EXAXXION! STAGE 3.2

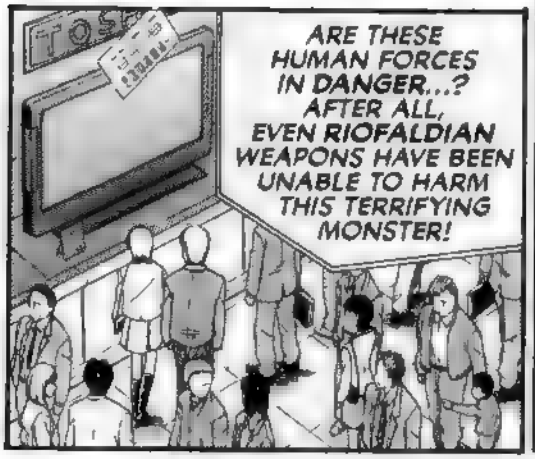
TARGET ACQUIRED!
IT'S WELL WITHIN OUR OPTIMAL RANGE!
ALL WEAPONS LOCKED ON!
ALL MEDIA, EVACUATE THIS AIRSPACE IMMEDIATELY!
THIS IS A GOVERNMENT ORDER!
I'M TAKING US OUT OF HERE ...!
STAY AS CLOSE TO THE ACTION AS THEY'LL ALLOW!
AND BE SURE TO GET THE BEST CAMERA ANGLE POSSIBLE OF THAT ROBOT!
HEY! AM I GETTING HAZARD PAY FOR THIS...?
OKAY, OKAY!! I'LL CLEAR IT WITH THE CHIEF!
AND ONE MORE THING...
...DON'T LET THE OTHER STATIONS' CHOPPERS GET ANY CLOSER!
WHUPP WHUPP
WHUPP

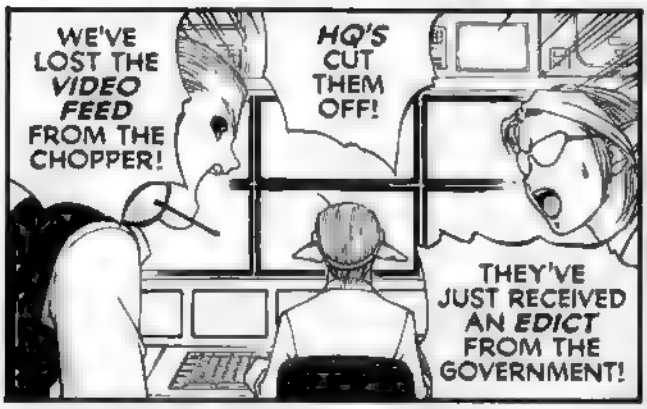
HUH ...?
THEY'VE ASSEMBLED *ONLY JSDF* AND *U.S. ARMY* TROOPS TO MEET ME...?
OF *COURSE,* MASTER HOICHI. IT'S A *PROPAGANDA COUP* FOR THE RIOFALDIANS WHENEVER YOU KILL *HUMANS.*
WELL... WHAT IF I JUST *IGNORE* THEM, AND WALK RIGHT ON BY?
PERFECT!
THAT SHOULD *REINFORCE* YOUR IMAGE AS *EARTH'S BENEVOLENT PROTECTOR.*
ALL RIGHT! LET'S GET A *MOVE ON,* THEN!
KSHOOM KSHOOM
YOU'RE SEEING *LIVE FOOTAGE* OF THE SO-CALLED *"EXAXXION"* ROBOT, A *TVF EXCLUSIVE!*
IT'S AN *AMAZING* SPECTACLE ...!
WAIT...THE ROBOT IS ADVANCING ON JSDF AND U.S. ARMY TROOPS DEPLOYED ALONG THE SHORELINE!

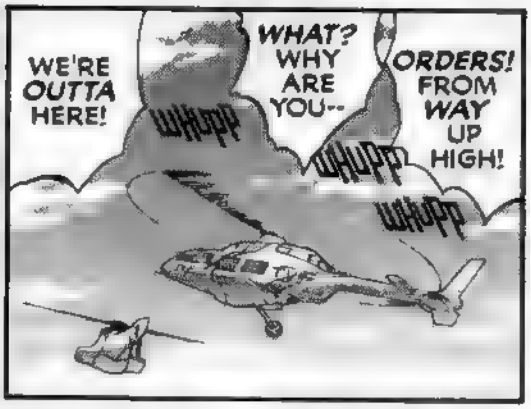
AKERD
AS YOU CAN SEE, NO RIOFALDIAN UNITS ARE DEPLOYED HERE!


WE HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT THIS ROBOT'S CANNONS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR TODAY'S DESTRUCTION OF THE RIOFALDIAN SECURITY CENTER BUILDING...

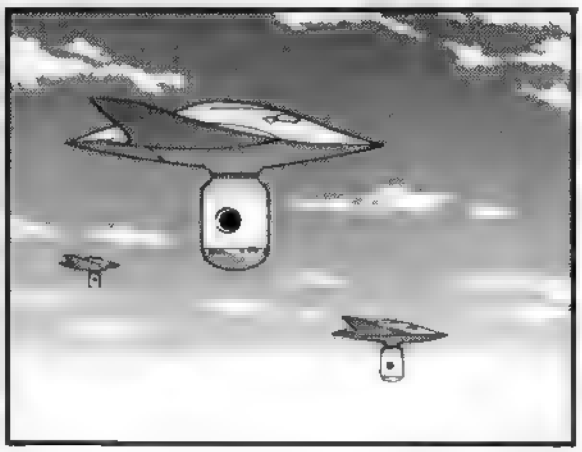

WHY WOULD IT--
KRRK
?!


ARE THESE HUMAN FORCES IN DANGER...? AFTER ALL, EVEN RIOFALDIAN WEAPONS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO HARM THIS TERRIFYING MONSTER!


WE'VE LOST THE VIDEO FEED FROM THE CHOPPER!
HQ'S CUT THEM OFF!
THEY'VE JUST RECEIVED AN EDICT FROM THE GOVERNMENT!


WE'RE OUTTA HERE!
WHAT? WHY ARE YOU--
ORDERS! FROM WAY UP HIGH!
WHUPP
WHUPP
WHUPP

BUT...THOSE OTHER AIRCRAFT ARE STAYING...
OPEN YOUR EYES! THEY'RE GOVERNMENT SHIPS!



MASTER KANO! THE RIOFALDIANS ARE WITHDRAWING THEIR FORCES FROM THE AREA! THEY'RE LEAVING ONLY A FEW AERIAL UNITS BEHIND, ALONG WITH ALL THE HUMAN TROOPS...
HRMM.
THIS SMELLS LIKE INFOWAR IN THE OFFING...
BEEP!
NORIKO, MY DEAR...IT'S TIME FOR SOME MORE MEDIA MANIPULATION! I'M SENDING SIERRA DOWN TO HELP YOU!
GMFF
YEF, FIR!
V V V M M M M M

SKLSSH
FIRST FLOOR, CLEAR!
YOU'VE SECURED THE WHOLE BLOCK, THEN?
YES, SIR!
BASEMENT AND PARKING LEVEL, CLEAR!
NO HUMAN LEAVES THIS BUILDING, UNDERSTAND?
AND NO RIOFALDIAN LEAVES WITHOUT A FULL I.D. CHECK!
I WANT YOU TO CHECK EVEN THOSE YOU KNOW PERSONALLY, UNDERSTAND?
YES, SIR!
NOW...ONE OF THE TARGETS IS A CHILD, REMEMBER? SO CHECK SMALL SPACES, TOO--EVEN CUPBOARDS AND BOXES!
THE TARGETS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE JUST TWO HUMAN WOMEN... BUT THEY TOOK OUT A DAMN BARUCHAD'D TROOPER!
BETTER LET THE DRONES TAKE POINT!
KLANKK
KCHAK

KSHANGG KSHANGG KSHANGG
THE FIRST DRONE'S GONE IN FROM THE EAST SIDE OF THE BUILDING, SIR.
EXCELLENT! NOW, CHECK ALL THE ELEVATOR SHAFTS... THEN SEAL THEM OFF!
KCHAK
STAY WHERE YOU ARE. PRODUCE YOUR I.D. AND CREDIT CARDS AND FACE THEM TOWARD THIS UNIT'S SENSORS.
NOW COMMENCING SCAN.
SECOND FLOOR: ALL THERMAL SIGNATURES ACCOUNTED FOR, ALL PERSONNEL IDENTIFIED AND CHECKED.
CLEAR.
THIRD FLOOR CHECKED.
CLEAR.
FOURTH FLOOR...

KSHANGG
KSHANGG
KSHANGG
KSHANGG
HERE THEY COME... GET BEHIND COVER, DEAR.
Y-YES, MA'AM ...!
SHL UPP
WHAMM

KASHINKK
?!
SKRANGG
AAA!
THE POINT DRONE IS DOWN, SIR!
WHERE ...?!
IT FELL FROM THE FIFTH FLOOR, SIR! ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE BUILDING!
DISPATCH ALL BARU-CHAD'D AND TERMINAL DRONES TO THAT LOCATION!
FSHHH
I WANT THE TARGETS CORNERED ON THE FIFTH FLOOR!
PULL ALL ORGANIC TROOPS BACK FROM THE BUILDING!
SEND IN THE ARMORED CAR!
VRMMBB

KTHNKK-KTHNKK KSHANGG-KSHANGG
KTHNKK-KTHNKK KSHANGG-KSHANGG KTHNKK
KSHANGG
WHAMM
BAMM
KRAKK

SLAM!
COMMANDER! WE'VE LOST THE TARGET, SIR! THE BUILDING READS CLEAR ALL THE WAY TO THE ROOF!
WHAT ...?!
WE FOUND THE CHASSIS OF A CRIPPLED DRONE ON THE FIFTH FLOOR, BUT OTHER THAN THAT, NO--
HOLD IT!
SO... WE HAD TWO DRONES ON POINT, UP ON THE FIFTH FLOOR?
NO, SIR. JUST ONE UNIT, NUMBER 75. THAT'S THE ONE THEY--
OH... YEAH! THEN THE ONE THAT FELL... HUH?
WHERE'S THE VAN THAT DRONE LANDED ON? FIND OUT NOW!

UH, SIR... THAT VAN... IT SEEMS TO HAVE, AH, DRIVEN OFF...
WHAT? WHO WAS DRIVING IT?
UH... NO ONE NOTICED, SIR...
YOU IDIOTS! IT WAS THEM!!
VRRRMMBB
I'M SORRY, AKANE...I DO HOPE YOU WEREN'T TOO BADLY SHAKEN UP BY OUR LITTLE PLUNGE, BACK THERE...!
NOT AT ALL! IF AUNTIE REIKO COULD HANDLE IT, THEN SO SHOULD I, RIGHT?
THOSE CONTACTS DON'T BOTHER YOU, DO THEY?
A LITTLE, BUT...
...THEY'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO I.D. ME NOW ...!
BUT... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, AUNTIE?
HA, HA... OW.
WELL, THAT DRONE'S SHELL WAS ONLY THIRTY INCHES IN DIAMETER...
I DO SEEM TO HAVE TWEAKED MY NECK A TEENSY BIT...!

I'M SORRY, AUNTIE REIKO... THIS IS ALL MY FAULT. IF I HADN'T--
I CHOSE THE DRONE DISGUISE, DEAR... AND I POPPED US BOTH INSIDE IT WITHOUT EVEN A WARNING.
SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME AKANE.
BUT WE DO HAVE TO DUMP THIS CAR, SOON, AND LOSE OURSELVES IN A CROWD...
KCHIK
AND THEN, UM, SLIP OUT OF TOWN...?
AH, NO, I'M AFRAID. THEY'RE CERTAIN TO HAVE ALL OF THE TRANSPORT ROUTES CLOSED.
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO KEEP PASSING FOR RIOFALDIANS, AND WAIT FOR THE CAVALRY TO ARRIVE.
HUH? WAIT FOR WHO ...?
FOR HOICHI, DEAR. HE'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE...

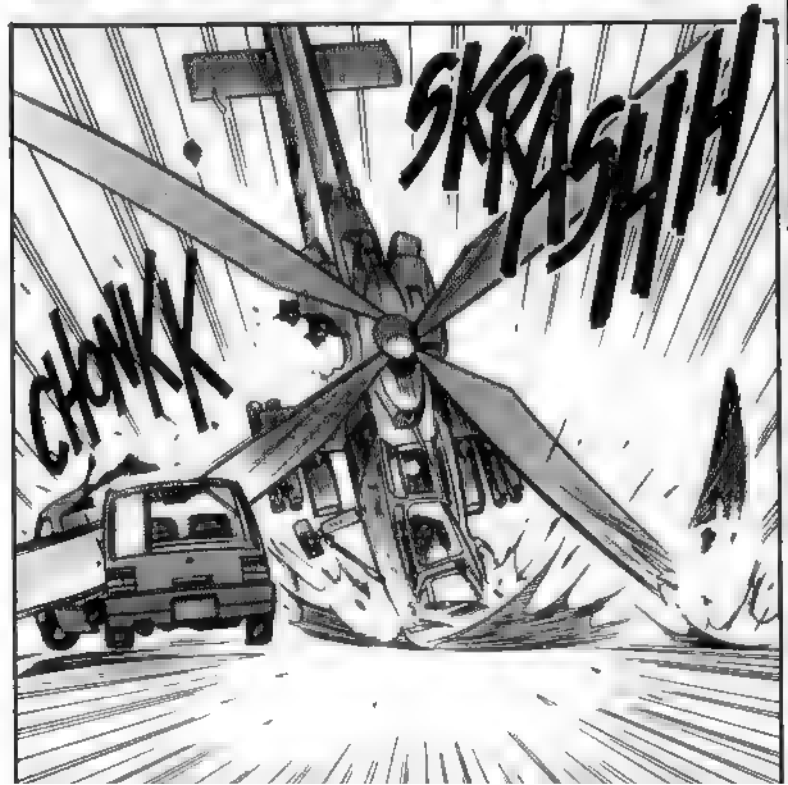
WHAT IS THIS CRAP?!
KRANGG
SPANGG
KPWINGG
KLANKK
KTHNKK
THEY'RE NOT SHOOTING BACK, OR ANYTHING!
THE AMERICANS, THE JSDF... THE TANKS AND HELOS... THEY'RE ALL JUST SITTING THERE!
THIS SMELLS BAD, HOICHI... YOU'D BEST WATCH YOUR ASS, MY BOY!
EXAXXION
THEY MUST HAVE ORDERS NOT TO SHOOT... THE 'FALDIES MUST BE UP TO SOMETHING!
HEY, IT'S COOL, GRAND-PA!
I JUST SHOVED A FEW TANKS ASIDE... I'M NOT KILLING ANYBODY, ALL RIGHT?

I'M GOING ASHORE NOW, GRAND-PA.
EXAXION
KLANG
FZZK
VORPP
WHOOSH
FZZK

004
004
FSHOOM
FSHOOM
FSHOOM
KLEBOOM
SIZZZZ
WHRAKKK

WHAT THE HELL--?!
THAT'S RIOFALDIAN FIRE! ON THE COMMAND LINK--THEY'VE BEEN ORDERED TO SHOOT AT US!
THAT'S CRAZY! WHY WOULD THEY--

GRANDPA! THEY'RE ATTACKING THE HUMANS UNDER THEIR OWN COMMAND--?!
I KNOW, LADDIE. I'M WATCHING IT BACK HERE ...!


SKRASHH
CHAKK

DAMN... NOW I GET IT!
CLEVER BASTARDS!

SIERRA! ZERO IN ON THEIR AREA COMNET AND--
RING
WAY AHEAD OF YOU, SIR!
WE'VE ALREADY MIRROR EMULATED THEIR COMM SYSTEMS AND PROCESSORS... WE'RE MONITORING EVERYTHING, MASTER KANO!
AND WE CRACKED THEIR CODE SWITCHING SEQUENCE, TOO...!
EXCELLENT, LADIES! NOW, GET READY TO INSERT FOOTAGE OVER THEIR OPEN CHANNELS!
FINE WORK, MY DEARS! YOU'LL HAVE ME ALL TO YOURSELVES TONIGHT ...!
OOH!
BEEP
HOICHI, LADDIE! DON'T GO ASHORE YET! YOU'D BEST STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE!
HUH?
YOU'RE SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF AN INFOWAR-- LEAVE THIS TO US!
MASTER KANO! THE NETWORKS HAVE JUST SWITCHED TO A RIOFALDIAN GOVERNMENT FEED...!
AH... HERE IT COMES!
RING

VMMM
--YOU'RE SEEING LIVE VIDEO OF THE SO-CALLED "EXAXXION" ROBOT.
LIVE, YOU SAY? ACCORDING TO THE TIME CODE IT'S ON A TWO-MINUTE DELAY LOOP...!
DOES THIS MONSTER INTEND TO PENETRATE THIS COASTAL DEFENSE LINE, HARDENED WITH TANKS AND HELICOPTERS?
OH! IT'S MOVED! IT'S EXTENDING ITS GARGANTUAN RIGHT ARM AND--
OH MY GOD! I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! IT'S BRUTALLY SMASHING THE TANKS ASIDE!
THE PILOT IS ALLEGED TO BE A HUMAN BOY...
...SO WHY IS HE ATTACKING HUMAN SOLDIERS ...?
OH, NO! NOW HE'S OPENED FIRE!
EH ...?
OH MY GOD! THE ROBOT'S LASERS ARE BLASTING THE TANKS APART!
WHAT THE DEVIL ...?

IT'S FIRING A MURDEROUS FUSILLADE OF LASER BEAMS FROM ITS PROW!

THE TANKS ARE BEING WIPED OUT!

SUPER-IMPOSING LASERS ON THE IMAGE LIKE THAT ...?

LOOKS CHEESY AS HELL ...!

THE HELICOPTERS ARE UNDER ATTACK, AS WELL!

THE ROBOT IS NOW SHOOTING LASERS FROM ITS HEAD!

THIS IS HORRIFY-ING!

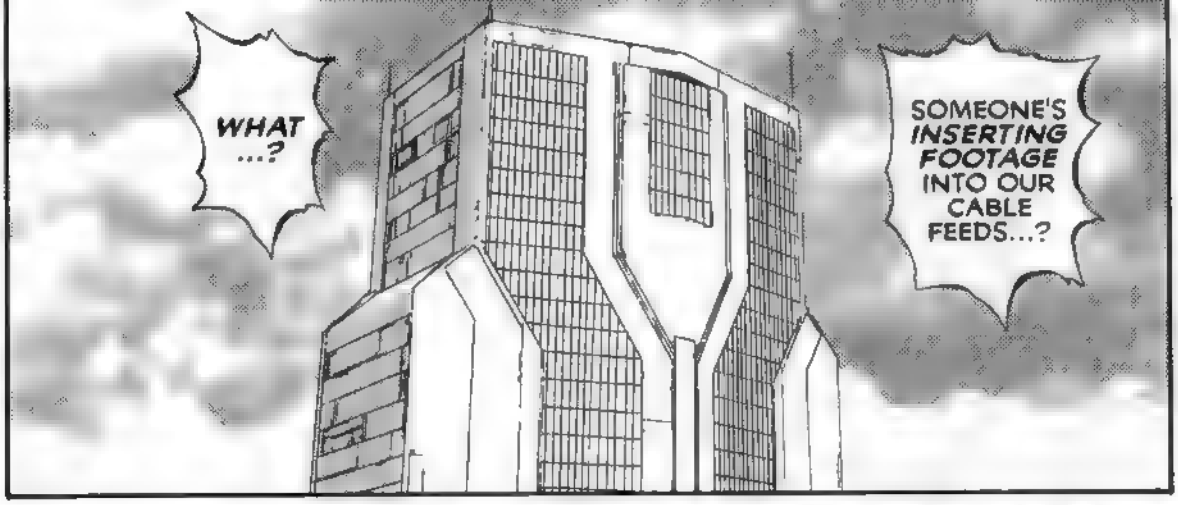
WHY THIS UNPROVOKED ATTACK? THESE UNITS NEVER EVEN FIRED A SHOT!

ISN'T HE... ISN'T THIS ROBOT... SUPPOSED TO BE ON EARTH'S SIDE...?

...THIS "EXAXXION" IS CLEARLY NO FRIEND OF THE U.S. OR JAPANESE MILITARY!
BUT...ATTACKING DEFENSELESS HELICOPTERS AND HUMAN TROOPS LIKE THIS...? BASED ON WHAT WE'RE SEEING HERE TODAY...
THE PILOT IS THOUGHT TO BE THE SAME BLACK-SUITED "ANGEL" WHO SO DRAMATICALLY SAVED THE INJURED NEAR MT. FUJI, EARLIER! WERE ALL HIS ALLEGED "GOOD WORKS" MERELY A RUSE...?
VRRMB
KLANKK
KLANKK
KLANKK
FSHOOM
SCREW FOLLOWING ORDERS! POP ALL SMOKE ROUNDS, NOW!
SIR! THEY'RE OPENING FIRE AGAIN--!

WHUPP-WHUPP-WHUPP
WE OUGHTA SHOOT BACK AT THOSE BASTARDS--!
WE CAN'T BREACH THEIR DAMNED SHIELDS, REMEMBER?
ZZRAKK
WHAT'S GOING ON, GRANDPA? A-ARE THE HUMAN TROOPS REBELLING ...?
GET A CLUE, LADDIE! ISAKA! SHOW HIM WHAT'S ON TV!
YES, SIR!
VMMM
THE TANKS ARE RETREATING... OH, NO!
HE HIT THEM AGAIN! THEY WERE RETREATING, AND HE DESTROYED THEM ANYWAY!
SALE 20%OFF!
NOW THE HELICOPTERS ARE FLEEING THE AIRSPACE... BUT HE'S CONTINUING TO BLAST THEM OUT OF THE SKY!

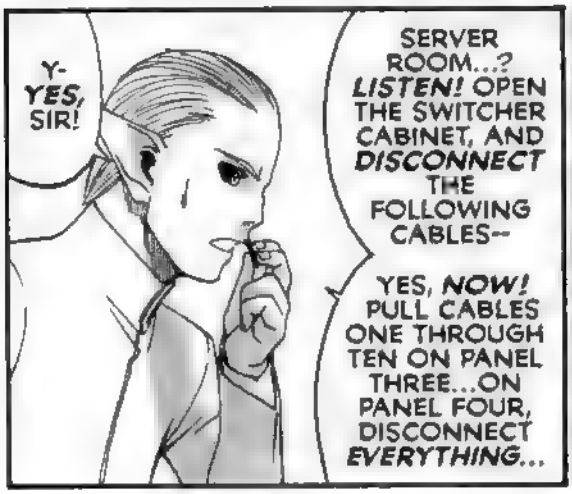
WHAT THE HELL, GRAND-PA--?! NO FAIR!!
I KNOW, MY BOY! THIS PISSES ME OFF, TOO!
THEY'RE CLAIMING THIS VIDEO FEED IS LIVE, BUT THEY'RE RUNNING IT WITH A TWO-MINUTE DELAY...
...GIVING THEM JUST ENOUGH TIME TO DIGITALLY ALTER THE IMAGES!
DAMN IT! THEY'RE MAKING ME LOOK LIKE A MONSTER...!
CALM DOWN, HOICHI! WE'RE SENDING THE RAW FOOTAGE OUT ON OTHER CHANNELS, UNEDITED!!
HUH ...?
HEY! LOOK AT THIS!
WHAT ...?
SOME-THING ON NET TV...?
OVER HERE! LOOK!
WHAT, THAT ROBOT BUTCHER? I'VE ALREADY SEEN--
OH NO YOU HAVEN'T!
HEY! CHECK IT OUT! THE NET'S GOT THE REAL FOOTAGE OF THE FIGHTING! THE 'FALDIES DOCTORED IT!
HUH? THEN... WE WERE WATCH-ING FAKED STUFF ...?


WHAT ...?
SOMEONE'S *INSERTING FOOTAGE* INTO OUR CABLE FEEDS...?

YES, SIR. TEN OF THE CHANNELS ON LOCAL CABLE *NET TV* SERVICES ARE RUNNING *UNEDITED VIDEO!*
WELL, *CUT THEM OFF!*

I'M *TRYING,* SIR! BUT SOMEONE'S CHANGED THE *ENCRYPTION...!*
WE'VE BEEN *HACKED?*

LOOKS *LIKE IT, SIR... I'M MAKING PROGRESS, BUT...*
CUT ALL THE SUBVERTED CHANNELS *MANUAL-LY!*


Y- *YES,* SIR!
SERVER ROOM...? *LISTEN!* OPEN THE SWITCHER CABINET, AND *DISCONNECT* THE FOLLOWING CABLES--
YES, *NOW!* PULL CABLES ONE THROUGH TEN ON PANEL THREE...ON PANEL FOUR, DISCONNECT *EVERYTHING...*

KSHHH
KSHHH
KSHHH
KSHHH

KSHH
THEY CUT THEM ALL MANUAL-LY, SIR.
SHOULD WE TRY TO SUBVERT THEIR MAIN CHANNELS, NOW?
NAH .. THAT'S ENOUGH, FOR THE MOMENT.
NOW, WE WAIT FOR THE RUMORS AND COPIES TO SWEEP THE NET.
BUT... IS THAT REALLY ENOUGH, SIR...?
THEY'LL CUT US OFF EVEN FASTER NEXT TIME, YOU KNOW... WE SIMPLY HAVE TO TRUST IN THE RAPIDITY OF THE ONLINE RUMOR DIFFUSION RATE.
UM... MISS TANEGA-SHIMA ...?
WHAT'S WRONG, STAR?
I... WH-WHAT IF WE LOSE THE INFOWAR, AND THE WHOLE WORLD ENDS UP THINKING MASTER KANO AND MASTER HOICHI ARE THE BAD GUYS...?
WELL, WE JUST HAVE TO KEEP A STEP AHEAD, AND MAKE SURE THAT NEVER HAPPENS... DON'T WE?
PEOPLE ARE SO FULL OF PRIDE THAT ONCE THEY SPEAK OUT BASED ON FALSE DATA, IT'S DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO RETRACT A FACTUALLY INCORRECT POSITION...
...EVEN WHEN THEY KNOW IT TO BE WRONG.
THAT'S WHY IT'S SO DAMN IMPORTANT TO GET TRUTH-- AND PROOF-- OUT TO THE MASSES, BEFORE THEY MAKE UP THEIR INFLEXIBLE LITTLE MINDS.
MASTER KANO...? IT'S MASTER HOICHI.

GRANDPA! I'LL GO ASHORE SOMEWHERE ELSE, OKAY? IF I DON'T RESCUE MOM AND AKANE SOON, THEN--
HOLD IT, MY BOY!
NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO, THEY'LL HAVE PLENTY OF SACRIFICIAL LAMBS IN PLACE!
THEN I'LL GO INLAND FROM HERE, DAMN IT! JUST FIND ME A WAY TO DO IT WITHOUT KILLING PEOPLE...!
HMM...HOW ABOUT THIS, LADDIE-- WHY DON'T YOU TRY A REVERSE GRAVITY JUMP?
THEN YOU CAN JUST FALL INTO THE TARGET ZONE.
"FALL" ...? HUH?
YES...AND THAT SHOULD GET YOU OFF THE SHORELINE BEFORE THEY CAN MANUFACTURE ANY MORE PROPAGANDA VIDEO...!
TAKE CARE OF IT, ISAKA!
YES, SIR.
H-HEY! ISAKA... WHAT ARE YOU DOING--?
ISN'T THIS A BIT DANGER-OUS, SIR...?
HEY, NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED!
HAHH?

WHOOSH
WHAT THE HELL? I'M FALLING... UP--?!

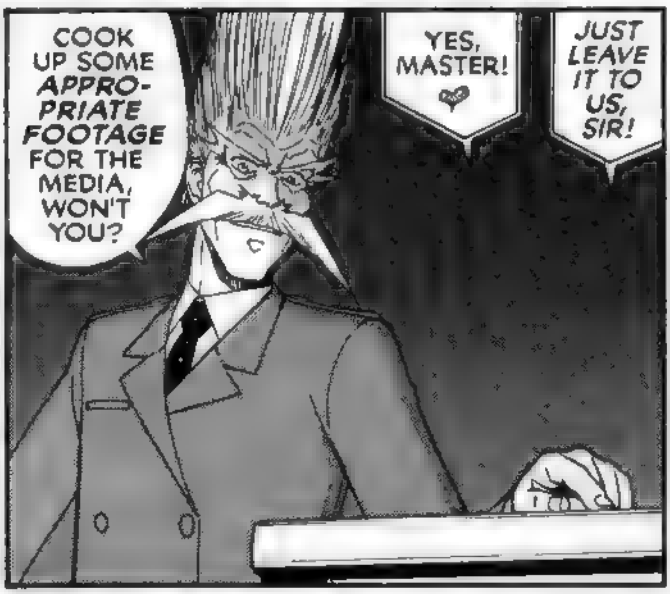
TO BE CONTINUED...!

3.3
SANNEN GUMI ZEAKEISHI STAGE 3.3

JEEZ... WE'RE FALLING INTO THE SKY ...?
YES, MASTER HOICHI. FALLING UPWARDS, USING REVERSED GRAVITATIONAL MANIPULATION.
ALTITUDE, 9000 FEET...
FSSSSH
WHOOSH
RESTORING NORMAL GRAVITATIONAL ORIENTATION...
WHIPP
GUAAA!
THEY'RE NOW FALLING TOWARD THE ASSIGNED LANDING COORDINATES, SIR.

AH... IS THIS GOING TO BE A PROBLEM, SIR...?
NAH, NOT AT ALL.
NORIKO! SIERRA!
BUT...THEY'RE DRAGGING THOUSANDS OF TONS OF WATER AND DEBRIS WITH THEM...AND SOME OF THE TANKS AND SOLDIERS, AS WELL...!
BEEP

YES, SIR?
WE'RE GOING TO CLAIM THAT EXAXXION'S UNDER ATTACK BY SOME 'FALDIE GRAVITY WEAPON.


COOK UP SOME APPRO-PRIATE FOOTAGE FOR THE MEDIA, WON'T YOU?
YES, MASTER!
JUST LEAVE IT TO US, SIR!

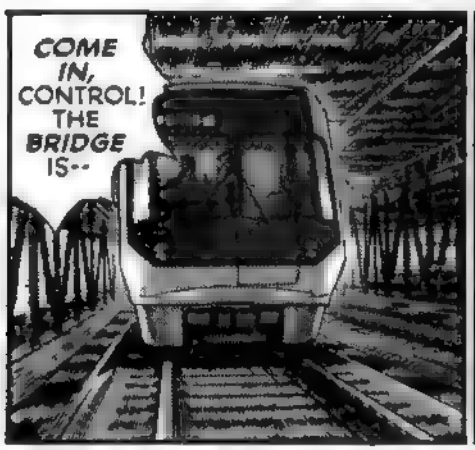
AH ...!

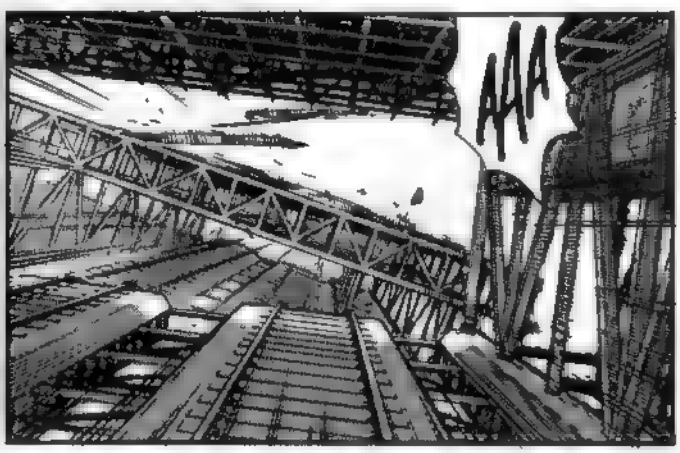
SIR! THEY'RE ABOUT TO COLLIDE WITH ONE OF THE TOKYO BAY BRIDGE'S TOWERS!
HA! THIS SHOULD BE LIVELY!

SKR
BC

TRON
EXAXXION
CAMPION
nGGG

KRROOMMBB
SPANGG SPANGG SPANGG
SKRNCHH


COME IN, CONTROL! THE BRIDGE IS--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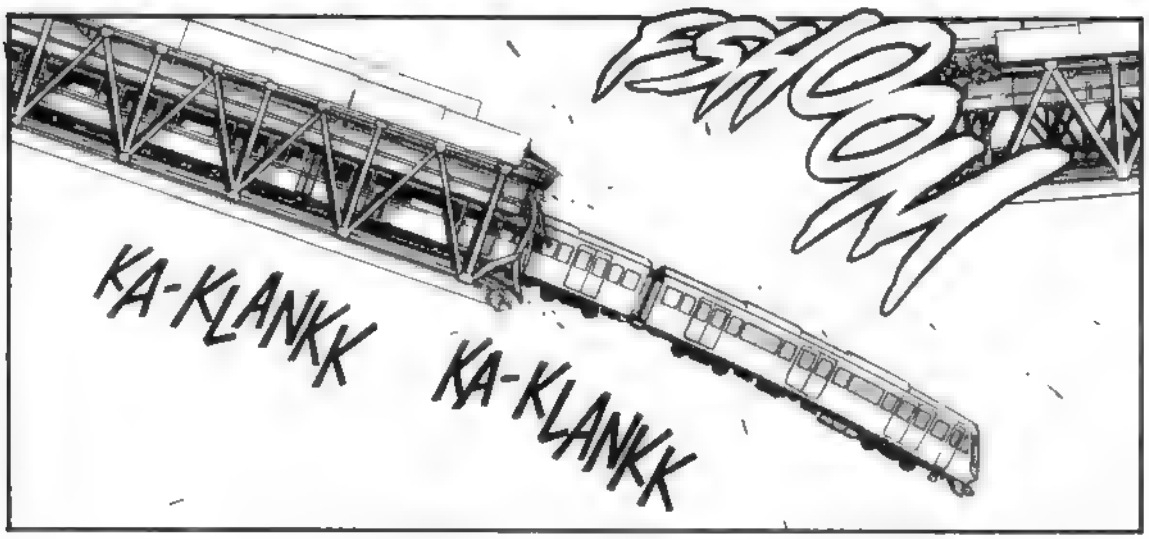
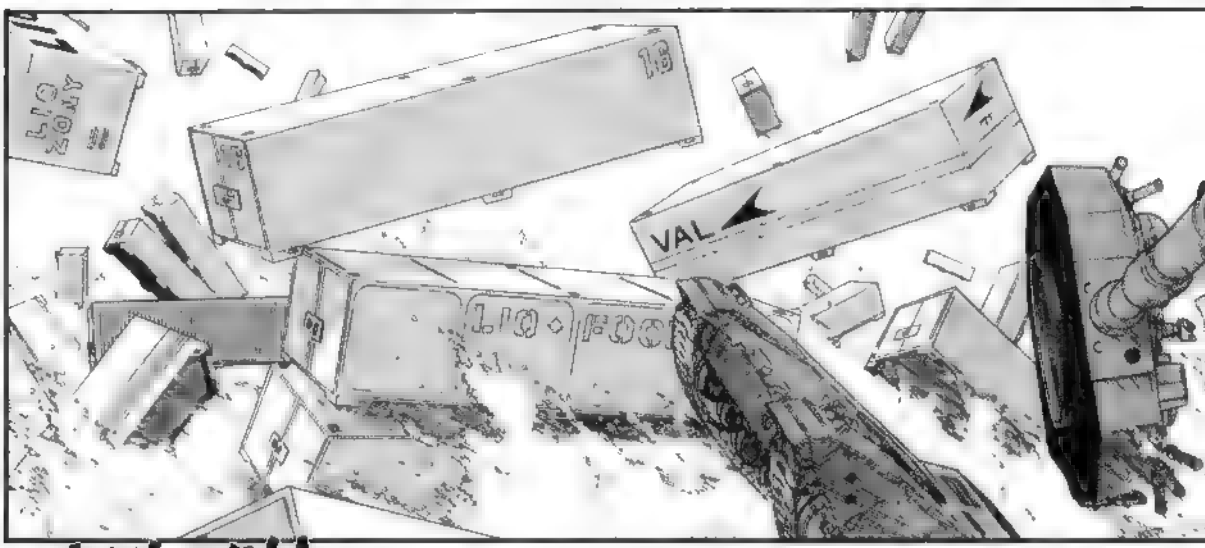
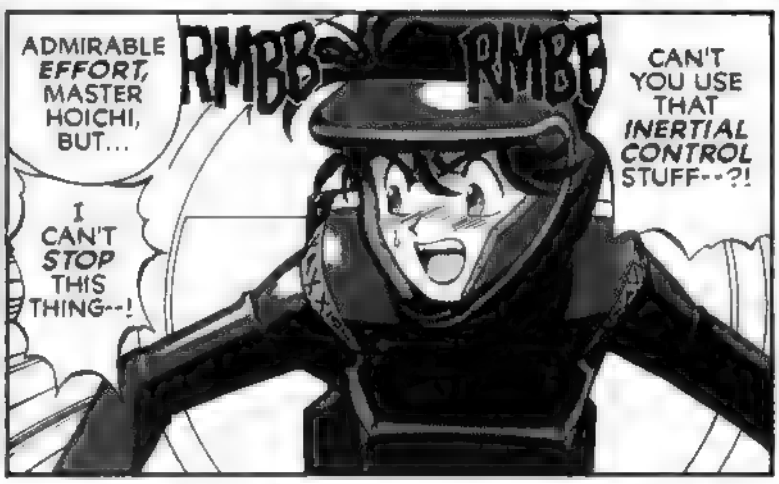

ESHOOM
KA-KLANKK
KA-KLANKK

FWHOOOSH
WE'RE ABOUT TO TOUCH DOWN...NOW REINSTATING NORMAL GRAVITATIONAL INTERACTION.
PLEASE BRACE YOURSELF...
WHOAAA!
CRASH
EXAXXON

SKR


VAL

KLAK KLAK KLAK
HR KK!


ADMIRABLE EFFORT, MASTER HOICHI, BUT...
I CAN'T STOP THIS THING--!
RMBB
RMBB
CAN'T YOU USE THAT INERTIAL CONTROL STUFF--?!

WHROOM
RMBB RMBB RMBB RMBB
RMBB RMBB RMBB RMBB RMBB RMBB
HUH? ANOTHER EARTH-QUAKE ...?
EEEK!
LOOK OUT--!
SPAK
ANSCHUTZ Part II
AUNTIE REIKO...! IS...IS THAT GUN ...?
KREEK KREEK KREEK
YES IT IS, DEAR ...!
WE'LL TAKE IT ALL, THANKS!

SHALL WE GO NOW, DEAR?
THANKS FOR THE NEW CLOTHES, AUNTIE ...!
BUT... WHERE DID YOU GET THAT CREDIT CARD ...?
OH, I MADE IT FROM THE NANO-MATERIAL I'M CARRYING, AKANE.
REALLY? YOU CAN DO THAT...? BUT...
IT'S EASY, DEAR. THE MATERIAL IS LACED WITH BILLIONS OF MICRO-SCOPIC COMPUTERS, AFTER ALL...
UM, OKAY... BUT WHAT IF THEY TRACE THE CARD, AND FIND OUT WHO WE REALLY ARE...?
THE NANO-COMPUTERS ARE EQUIPPED WITH HOSUKE'S VERY BEST HACKING SOFTWARE, DEAR. DON'T WORRY...!

HOSUKE...? YOU MEAN YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW, RIGHT? GUN'S GRAND-FATHER ...?
YES, DEAR. THE NANOMATERIAL MY SUIT IS MADE OF, EVEN THAT GIANT ROBOT THAT HOICHI IS PILOTING...HOSUKE MADE THEM ALL!
R-REALLY...
OH, I ALMOST FORGOT... DROP YOUR OLD CLOTHES IN
ANSCHUTZ
OH... RIGHT!
FWPP
VREEE
ANSCHUTZ
SO, AUNTIE REIKO... AFTER WE ESCAPE...
...COULD YOU ASK PROFESSOR KANO TO GIVE ME AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW ...?
I'M SORRY, DEAR. I CAN'T DO THAT.
NOW IS NOT A GOOD TIME, I'M AFRAID.
AW, REALLY ...? B-BUT...
AH... I SEE.
WHSSH
PSHTT
WELL... MAYBE IF YOU WERE FAMILY...

UM... "FAMILY" ...?
I'D BE VERY PLEASED IF YOU WERE TO BECOME MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, AKANE, DEAR.
EH ...?
DON'T YOU LIKE HOICHI ...?
WH... WH... WHAAT?!
B-BUT... AUNTIE REIKO...! EVEN... EVEN IF I LIKE GUN A LOT...
...MY MOM WOULD N-NEVER ...!
AND... WHAT ABOUT MY AGE?!
IT WOULD ALL WORK OUT, DEAR. HOICHI LOVES YOU DEEPLY!
I KNOW THIS. I'M HIS MOTHER, AFTER ALL!
AND I'LL CONVINCE YOUR MOTHER... TRUST ME.
BUT... WHY SO SOON ...?
AGAIN, DON'T WORRY, DEAR!

YOU ARE QUITE OLD ENOUGH... YOU'RE VERY MATURE!
BESIDES, SOON, WE'LL BE WRITING THE LAWS... AND CHANGING MORE THAN A FEW OF THEM!
B-BUT... WAIT A SEC...
DO YOU MEAN... PROFESSOR KANO INTENDS TO...?
I SAID SO, EARLIER, DIDN'T I?
HOSUKE IS GOING TO RULE THE WORLD!
H-HE IS.....? REALLY ...?
PAX KANO, MY DEAR.

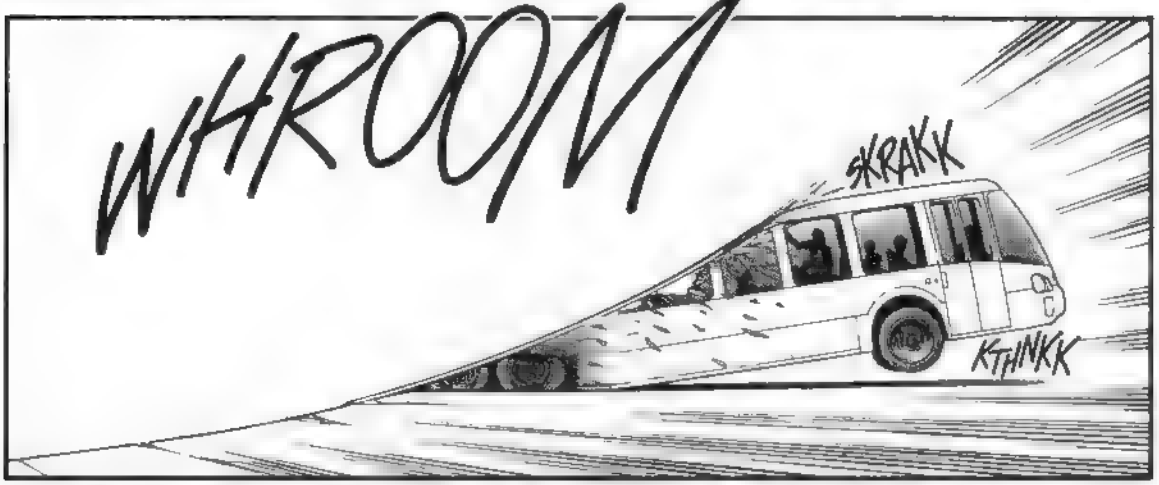
"PAX... KANO"...?
EXAXXION IS *VASTLY* STRONGER THAN ANYTHING FIELDED BY THE RIOFALDIANS... OR *ANYONE ELSE,* FOR THAT MATTER! IT'S OUR *DUTY* TO RULE AND BRING PEACE, YOU SEE...!

G-GEE, AUNTIE REIKO...
...YOU'RE, UM... FULL OF SURPRISES!
EXAXXION IS NOW DEPARTING THE LANDING ZONE.
KCHAK
SKSHH
CURRENTLY ADVANCING DOWN THE MAIN ROUTE TO SHINJUKU...
THE TOKYO BAY BRIDGE HAS COLLAPSED, SIR. AUTOMOBILES AND TRAINS LOST...VERY HEAVY CASUALTIES.
NORIKO, SIERRA... HOW GOES THE COVER-UP?
FINE, SIR! WE'RE INSERTING FOOTAGE OF A RIOFALDIAN GRAVITY CRANE FLINGING EXAXXION INTO THE BRIDGE.
GOOD WORK, MY DEARS!
A SQUADRON OF RIOFALDIAN COMBAT UFOS ARE CLOSING IN FAST, SIR... ENGAGEMENT ESTIMATED IN EIGHTEEN SECONDS.
THEIR WEAPONRY IS NO THREAT TO EXAXXION, WHATSO-EVER...

HRMM... THINGS ARE GOING A LITTLE *TOO* WELL, HERE...
THEY WOULDN'T JUST *ABANDON* THE RIOFALD ARCOLOGY, WOULD THEY...?
KYOOM
DAMN IT... THE STREETS ARE JUST TOO *NARROW!* I'M *TRAMPLING* TOKYO...!
DON'T WORRY, MASTER HOICHI. I'M *ADJUSTING YOUR STEPS* TO KEEP CASUALTIES TO A MINIMUM... *REALLY!*

XION

KTHUNK


WHROOM
SKRAKK
KTHNKK

FFFOOSH

H-HEY, *ISAKA!* CAN'T YOU *DO* SOMETHING? I'M CRUSHING *EVERYTHING IN THE STREET...!*

THAT *IS* UNFORTUNATE... I'LL *EXPAND* THE RADIUS OF EXAXXION'S *STEPPING FIELDS,* THEN.

"STEPPING FIELDS" ...? WHAT'RE *THOSE?*

THEY'RE LIKE *INVISIBLE SNOWSHOES,* RADIATING FROM THE *SOLES* OF EXAXXION'S *FEET* TO DISPERSE ITS WEIGHT OVER A LARGER AREA...

THAT'S WHAT'S CAUSING THE DAMAGE, RIGHT? THEN TURN 'EM *OFF!*

BUT *WITHOUT* THE STEPPING FIELDS, EXAXXION'S FEET WOULD *SMASH DOWN* THROUGH THE PAVEMENT AND INTO THE *SUBWAY LINES*...THE DAMAGE WOULD BE *MUCH* WORSE, I'M AFRAID.

I DON'T FRICKING *BELIEVE* THIS...! THEN AT LEAST *LENGTHEN MY STRIDE,* HUH?

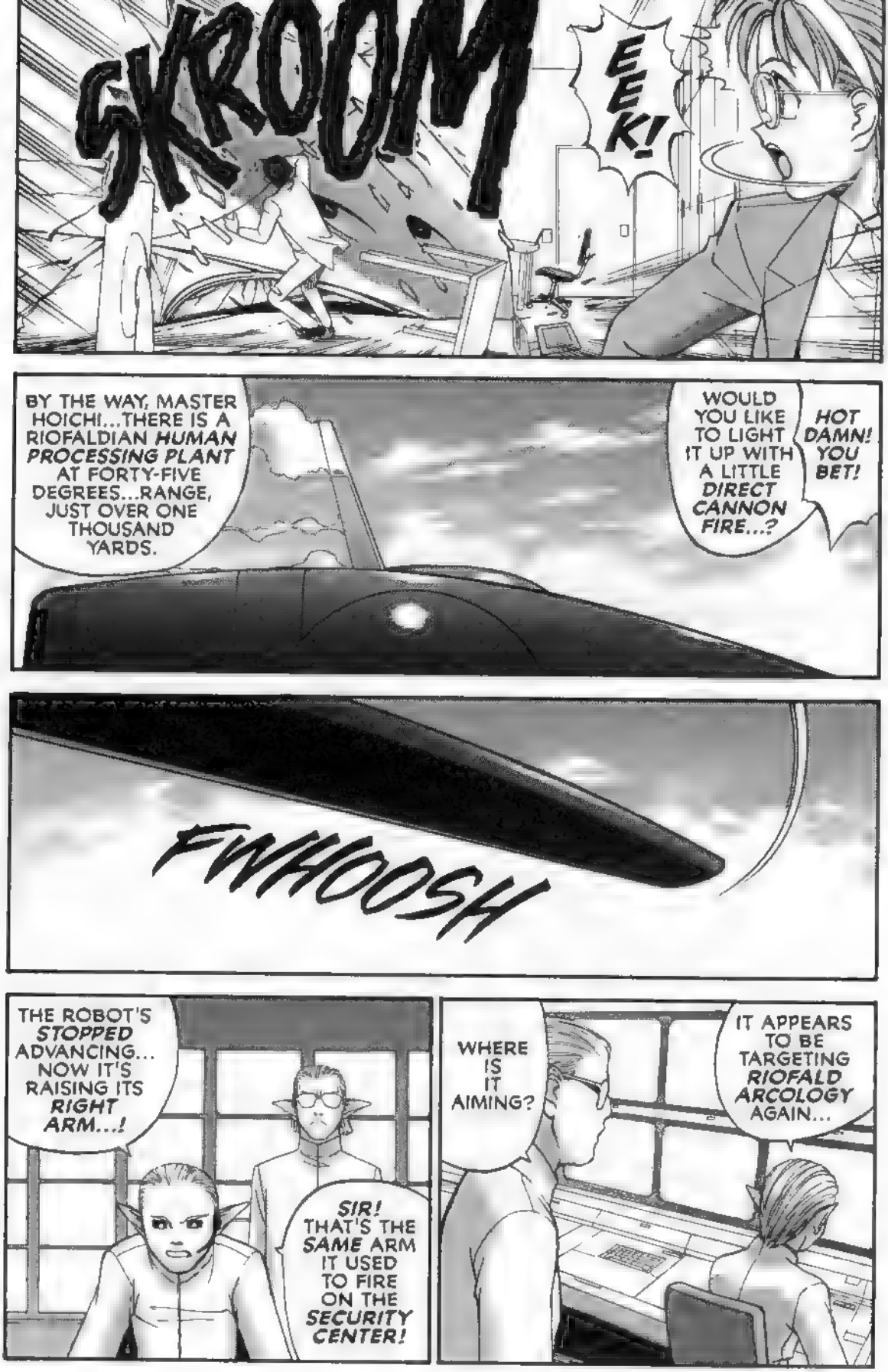
KTHOOM

KTHOOM KTHOOM

THAT I CAN DO! ♫

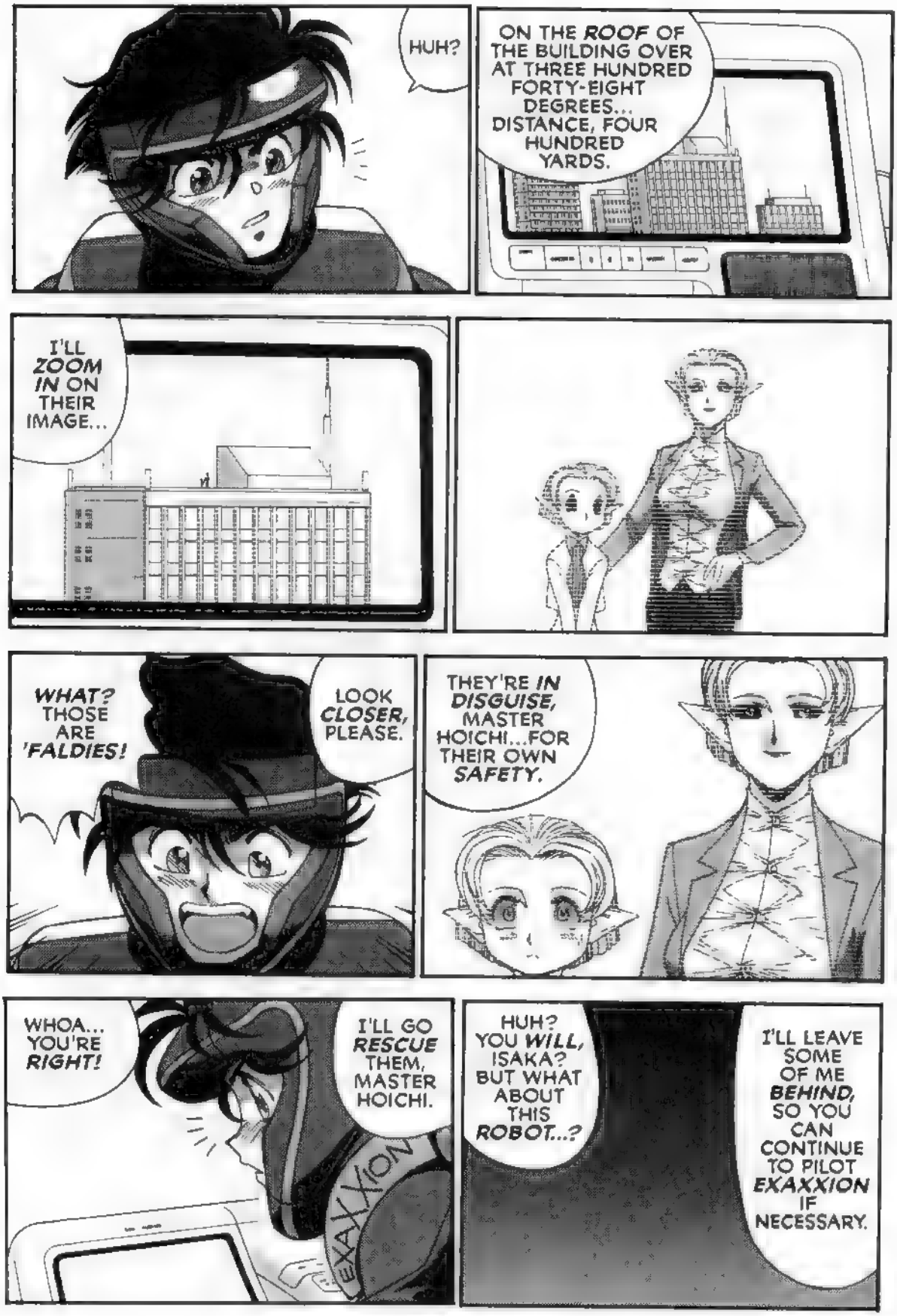
VRTTMM
FWSHH
FWSHH
KTHOOM
KTHOOM
KTHOOM
PSHNKK
WHSHH
WHOOSH
WHSHH
TWO OF THE ENEMY'S *UFOS* HAVE ATTACHED THEMSELVES TO OUR *ANTENNAE.*
ARE THEY TRYING TO *HACK INTO US...?*
NO, THEY'RE TRYING TO BREACH EXAXXION'S SYSTEMS VIA A CONCERTED *POWER SURGE.*
BUT WE'LL GIVE THEM A SURGE *RIGHT BACK...*
...A *THOUSAND-FOLD STRONGER,* OF COURSE!

FZZAKK
SPZZK
FZZK
FWHOOM
BOMF
BOMF
WHAM
WHAT WAS THAT?! MY MONITOR JUST-- OHMIGAWD!
YOUR HAIR ...!
THE SERVER ROOM'S ON FIRE--!
H-HEY! THOSE UFOS ARE--


SKROOM!
EEK!
BY THE WAY, MASTER HOICHI...THERE IS A RIOFALDIAN *HUMAN PROCESSING PLANT* AT FORTY-FIVE DEGREES...RANGE, JUST OVER ONE THOUSAND YARDS.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIGHT IT UP WITH A LITTLE *DIRECT CANNON FIRE...?*
HOT DAMN! YOU BET!
FWHOOSH
THE ROBOT'S *STOPPED* ADVANCING... NOW IT'S RAISING ITS *RIGHT ARM...!*
SIR! THAT'S THE *SAME* ARM IT USED TO FIRE ON THE *SECURITY CENTER!*
WHERE IS IT AIMING?
IT APPEARS TO BE TARGETING *RIOFALD ARCOLOGY* AGAIN...

SIR! THE BARREL'S LOCKED ONTO THE HUMAN PROCESSING PLANT! I'LL WARN THEM RIGHT N--
TOO LATE.
WHKOOM
WHKOOM WHKOOM WHKOOM
KCHOOM
CHOOM CHOOM

COMMAND! WE'RE UNDER ATTA--
WHKoOM
ALL RIGHT! MAKE FERTILIZER OUTTA US, WILL YA?
MASTER HOICHI! I'VE LOCATED MISS REIKO AND MISS HINO!
EXAXXION
EXAXXION


HUH?
ON THE ROOF OF THE BUILDING OVER AT THREE HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT DEGREES... DISTANCE, FOUR HUNDRED YARDS.
I'LL ZOOM IN ON THEIR IMAGE...
WHAT? THOSE ARE 'FALDIES!
LOOK CLOSER, PLEASE.
THEY'RE IN DISGUISE, MASTER HOICHI...FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY.
WHOA... YOU'RE RIGHT!
I'LL GO RESCUE THEM, MASTER HOICHI.
EXAXXION
HUH? YOU WILL, ISAKA? BUT WHAT ABOUT THIS ROBOT...?
I'LL LEAVE SOME OF ME BEHIND, SO YOU CAN CONTINUE TO PILOT EXAXXION IF NECESSARY.

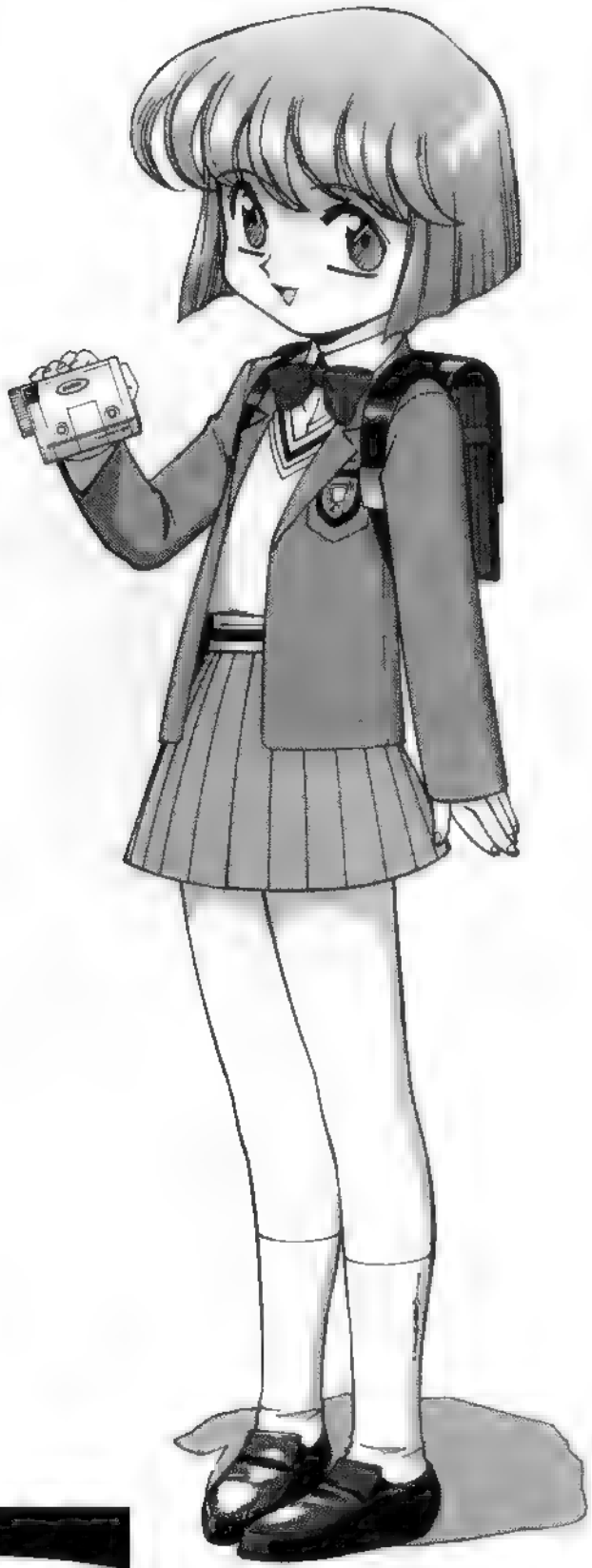
BYE FOR NOW!
WHSHH
H-HEY ...!
PSHNK
VMMM
OH! ISN'T THAT THE VEHICLE GUN WAS RIDING ...?
IT'S MISS ISAKA, YES.
WHSHH
ISAKA ...? YOU MEAN... THAT'S HER?!
SNAP

PLEASED TO MEET YOU AT LAST, MS. REIKO ...!
HOSUKE'S TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOU, DEAR.

I'VE COME TO RETRIEVE YOU TWO!
THANK YOU, ISAKA.
TMPP
....
....
SO...LET'S HURRY BACK TO MASTER HOICHI, SHALL WE?
KTHOOM
KTHOOM
HERE WE GO ...!
WHOOSH
SHMP
KSHOOM

WHOOSH
WHISSH
VMMM
HERE THEY ARE, MASTER HOICHI...
WAAH!
I'M SO PROUD OF YOU, SON!
OUCHIE...!

A-
AKANE
...?
UH...
JEEZ...!
EEK!
D-DON'T
LOOK,
GUN!
OUR
SUBJECTS
HAVE MADE
CONTACT
WITH THE
ROBOT,
SIR.
BOTH
OF
THEM?
WE'RE MONITORING
THE ONE YOU
INJECTED WITH
NANOMACHINES,
MAJOR RYA'AM...
SHE'S
CONFIRMED
AS BEING
ABOARD.
AH...
THAT'S
ALL
I
NEEDED
TO
KNOW.
COMMENCING
INTRUSION
OPERATION.
KCHK
SHUCK
TO BE CONTINUED...!



3.4

OH, GOD... IT HURTS ...!
AKANE?!
GOODNESS... THOSE MUST BE NANO-MACHINES!
AXXION
SHE WAS SHOT IN THE LEG WHILE WE WERE ESCAPING...! I REMOVED THE PROJECTILE, BUT...
...IT MUST HAVE INJECTED NANO-MACHINES INTO HER...!
AAA! ....

BWEEE BWEEE
ERROR
ALERT
ERROR
WARNING
ERROR
BWEEE
=VREEEP=
!?!
NANO-ELECTRONIC CIRCUITRY HAS FORMED INSIDE MISS AKANE'S BODY...
...AND THESE MICRO-SCOPIC COMPUTERS ARE NOW TRYING TO JACK INTO EXAXXION'S OPERATING SYSTEM.
INITIATING DEFENSIVE COUNTER-MEASURES ...!

AKANE!
WHISSH
EXAXXION
KREEEK
KREEEK
KREEEK
AAH!
S-STOP IT, GUN! YOU'RE HURTING ME!
HOICH!!

VREEP BWEEE
ERROR
ALERT!
BWEEE BWEEE
MASTER HOICHI! A MASSIVE HACKING ASSAULT IS UNDERWAY! OUR SYSTEMS MAY CRASH!
YOU AND MISTRESS REIKO MUST EVACUATE THE COCKPIT AT ONCE!
I CAN'T LEAVE AKANE, DAMN IT! JUST CUT THOSE WIRES, ALL RIGHT?
THE RIOFALDIAN NANOMACHINES HAVE SET UP A SELF-DESTRUCT SYSTEM INSIDE HER BODY--IF WE CUT THEM, SHE'LL DIE!
ISAKA! CAN'T WE JUST DISCONNECT THE OUTER PANELS OF THE CONSOLES, AND PEEL THEM OFF?
THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, MISTRESS REIKO... ALL OF THIS COCKPIT'S CONSOLES AND DISPLAYS ARE ACTUALLY INTEGRAL, SOLID-STATE UNITS OF NANO-PROCESSORS!
P-PLEASE, GUN... HELP ME...
...IT HURTS SO BAD...
AKANE ...!
ISAKA! CAN YOU CUT HER LOOSE ANYWAY, AND THEN REVIVE HER WITH YOUR NANOS IF SHE DIES?
SORRY, MASTER HOICHI... BUT UNTIL I'VE FULLY ANALYZED THE ENEMY NANO-MACHINES, I CAN'T DO THAT.
AH ...?! HOICHI!

KCAPOW
EXAXXION
AAH!
CATASTROPHIC SYSTEM DYSFUNCTION! EVACUATE THE COCKPIT IMMEDIATELY!
FWAOOSH
EXAXXION
SKRASHH

WHKOOM
SKRASHH
DON'T WORRY ABOUT US, ISAKA! AKANE'S STILL IN TROUBLE, DAMN IT!
BUT...
ISAKA! GET THEM THE HELL OUTTA THERE, NOW!
GRAND-PA! W-WAIT--
LISTEN, MY BOY...I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG IT'LL TAKE TO RECAPTURE EXAXXION'S CONTROL SYSTEMS...
...BUT I WILL DO IT, BY GOD! COUNT ON IT! FOR NOW, GET OUT OF THERE!

AAAH...!
GUN, H-HELP ME! SOMETHING'S... INVADING ME...
...INVADING MY MIND...
PLEASE, HOSUKE! HELP AKANE ...!
SHE MAY NOT LAST MUCH LONGER ...!
HOICHI'S SAFETY HAS TO COME FIRST, HERE!
ISAKA-- PRIORITY COMMAND! LEAVE AN ANTIBODY BEHIND, AND GET REIKO AND HOICHI OUT OF THE COCKPIT NOW!
YES, MASTER HOSUKE.
WAIT, DARLING! DON'T--
HUH ...?
DARLING ...?
FWSHH
GAAH--!
XION
NO--!

AE ANE!

GUN ...?

WHOOSH

GUNNER BOOK

NO! TAKE US BACK TO THE COCKPIT, DAMN IT!

FWSSH

MASTER HOSUKE'S COMMAND TAKES PRIORITY, I'M AFRAID...

GRAND-PA! YOU GOTTA STOP THIS--!

FSHOOOM

RMBBB
I CAN'T LEAVE AKANE *ALL ALONE* BACK THERE, ISAKA! YOU HAVE TO--
FSHOOM
YOU *DIDN'T* LEAVE HER ALL ALONE, MASTER HOICHI. *I'M* STILL THERE, YOU KNOW!
WHAT?
I'M A *COPY* OF THE ORIGINAL ISAKA, YOU SEE. MY *INITIAL* BODY MASS AND PERSONALITY CONSTRUCT ARE STILL BACK ABOARD *EXAXXION!*
AH ...?!
ISAKA ...?
DON'T BE *SCARED,* AKANE! I'LL *SAVE* YOU, I PROMISE!

I'VE ALREADY INJECTED MY *OWN* NANO-MACHINES INTO YOUR BODY!
I'LL *REPEL* THE ENEMY NANOS, AND RETURN YOUR *BODY* TO YOU!
HAHH...
THMP
PWONGG
ANY *CONFIR-MATION* YET THAT MY NANOS HAVE *SEIZED CONTROL* OF THE ROBOT?
NOT *YET*, SIR... IN FACT, THE CONTROL RATIO IS *FALLING!*
OUR MONITORING FEED IS *DESTABIL-IZING*, SIR!
BUT... *CONVENTIONAL SOFTWARE* CAN'T BLOCK A *NANO-HACKING* ATTEMPT, CAN IT...?
CLEARLY, *THEY'RE* USING NANO-TECHNOLOGY AS WELL.
HUH? DO HUMANS EVEN *HAVE* NANO-TECH...?

STAY AWAKE, AKANE!
IF YOU DON'T, THEY'LL SUBSUME YOUR CONSCIOUS-NESS...!
AH--!
EEK!
SHOOM

KPPP
ZZZZT
ZZZZT
ZZZZT
YOU MUST PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, AKANE.
THEY'RE TRYING TO HIJACK YOUR PERSONALITY!
VMMM
ISAKA ...? WHAT WERE THOSE THINGS ...?
A NANO-COMPUTER-GENERATED VIRUS, TARGETING YOUR BRAIN/BODY INTERFACE, I'M AFRAID...
I'VE MODELED THIS VIRTUAL REALITY ENVIRONMENT SO THAT YOU CAN EXPERIENCE THE BATTLE WITH ME.

MY NANOMACHINES ARE DESTROYING THE *RIOFALDIAN* NANOS THAT ARE SPAWNING THE VIRUS.

WE HAVE *NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY* OVER THEM, SO VICTORY IS ONLY A *MATTER OF TIME...!*

THE CONTROL RATIO IS *STILL* FALLING, SIR!

CEASE ATTACK, AND SWITCH ALL NANOMACHINES TO *DEFENSIVE* MODE! WE *HAVE* TO SECURE THE HOST!

SHLURP !!

GUN--! H- *HELP* M--☆

NO... PLEASE... DON'T ...!
SPANK
ISAKA... HELP ...!
PSHH
YOU'RE SAFE, AKANE... FOR THE MOMENT, AT LEAST.
THE VIRUS JUST WENT ON THE DEFENSIVE.
BINK
IT'S TRYING TO SURVIVE BY ENGULFING YOU.
MERGE WITH ME, AKANE.
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY THAT WE CAN EXPEL THE VIRUS.
NO... DON'T...THIS WOULD BE MY FIRST KISS...I DON'T WANT...
SPANK
IT'S ALL IN YOUR MIND, DEAR!

ZZZSHH
!
SHOOM
AAA ...!
NOW SYNCHRON-IZING OUR COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS... MERGING MEMORIES...

IT WAS *YOU*, WASN'T IT? YOU *RECORDED* US, AND SHOWED IT TO THE *TEACHERS!*

YA FRIGGIN' LI'L *SNITCH!*

LET'S SEE YOU DO YOUR BIG-SHOT *REPORTING* WITHOUT A *CAMERA!*

KRAKK

KRNCH

NO! THAT'S THE *MEDIA CLUB'S--*

AW, *SHAD-DUP,* SNITCH!

NOW WE'RE GONNA MESS *YOU* UP!

WHOKK

KSHHH

SHE'S *READY,* MASTER HOSUKE.

HER *MATERIAL MODELING* IS PERFECT, SIR.

HI! ♥

YOUR NAME IS *ISAKA MINA-GATA...*

...AND *I'M* YOUR NEW FRIEND, *RYOKO TANEGA-SHIMA!*

THANK YOU, RYOKO. MY BODY SEEMS TO BE FUNCTIONING OPTIMALLY.

THAT'S WONDER-FUL, ISAKA!

CHALK UP ANOTHER SUCCESS, LADIES!

HEY, I PUNCHED OUT THESE LITTLE SHITS JUST 'CAUSE THEY PISS ME OFF, OKAY?

SO DON'T TELL ANYBODY THAT I DID IT TO SAVE YOU, ALL RIGHT?

TH... THANK YOU, GUN ...! =SNIFF=

JEEZ, STOP CRYING, WILL YA? LIKE I SAID, I DIDN'T DO IT FOR YOU!

I...I KNOW, BUT... YOU'RE HURT...

SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

ISAKA!

YOU'LL BE PROTECTING A BOY, NAME OF HOICHI.

FIRST, GET HIM TO WEAR THIS.

IT'S A GUNNER GLOVE...

HERE.

THE *MONITOR'S* BUSTED, BUT THE *VIEWFINDER* STILL WORKS FINE.

HUH? YOU *FIXED* THIS, GUN?

HEY, I'M THE GREAT INVENTOR HOSUKE KANO'S *GRANDSON,* REMEMBER? THIS WAS *EASY.*

THANK YOU! *REALLY!* I'M SO *HAPPY!*

YEAH, WELL, WHEN THE RIOFALDIANS *INVADE,* MAKE SURE YOU *FILM* IT, HUH?

YOU'RE STILL WORRYING ABOUT *THAT* ...?

DAMN *RIGHT* I AM! 'CAUSE WHEN THEY *DO,* YOU GOTTA KEEP YOUR *PROMISE,* RIGHT?

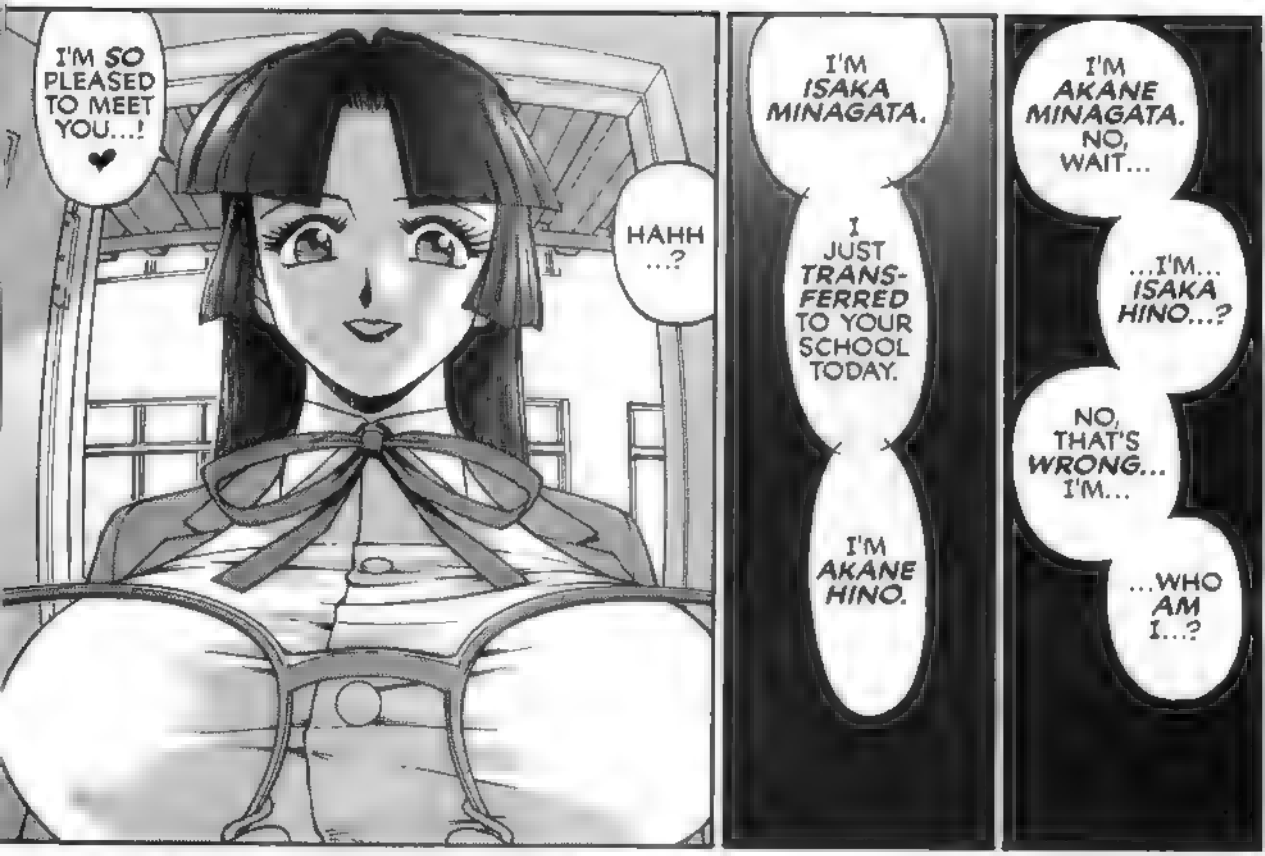
UH... MY *PROMISE* ...?

YEAH... THAT YOU'D, Y'KNOW... LET ME *MAKE OUT* WITH YOU...

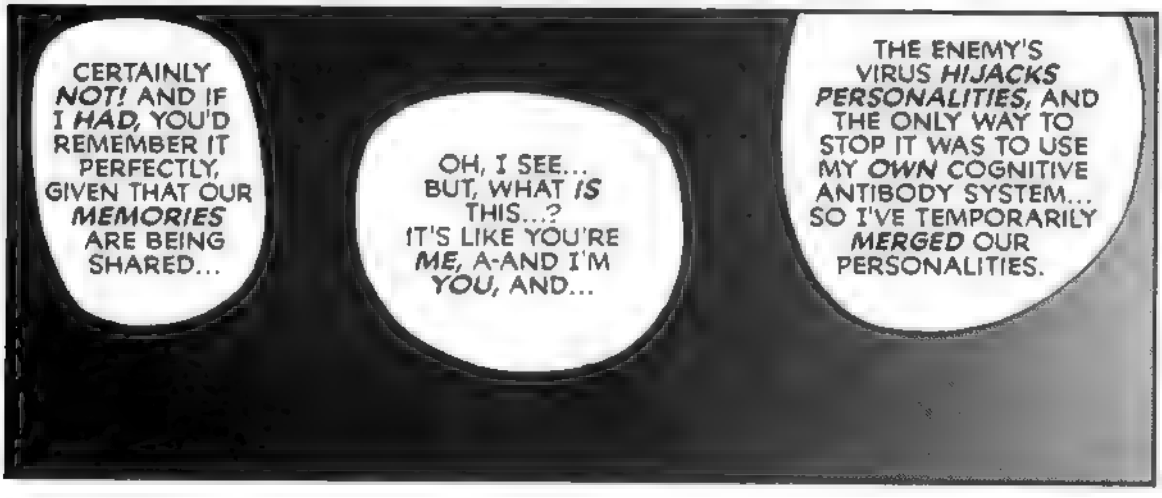
OH, *GEE,* GUN... I...

WELL... IF YOU *WANT TO,* HOICHI...YOU JUST HAVE TO, UM... *ASK.*

D-DON'T BE *STUPID*... I DIDN'T *MEAN* IT LIKE THAT!
I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW I'M *SERIOUS* ABOUT WHAT MY *GRANDPA* BELIEVES, OKAY?
I DIDN'T MEAN TO *THREATEN* YOU WITH *PUNISH-MENT* OR WHAT-EVER...
BUT, GUN... IT WOULDN'T BE *PUNISH-MENT* IF IT WERE WITH *YOU*...
.....
.....
....!
UH, WELL... I, UH, *GOTTA GO...!*
BUT *EVERYTHING* MY GRANDPA SAID...IT'S *ALL TRUE*, YOU KNOW...!
GUN, YOU *DUMMY*...
EMPPH
MISS *AKANE HINO?*


I'M SO PLEASED TO MEET YOU...! ❤
HAHH ...?
I'M ISAKA MINAGATA.
I JUST TRANS-FERRED TO YOUR SCHOOL TODAY.
I'M AKANE HINO.
I'M AKANE MINAGATA. NO, WAIT...
...I'M... ISAKA HINO...?
NO, THAT'S WRONG... I'M...
...WHO AM I...?

ISAKA.... YOU'RE AN ANDROID, AREN'T YOU...?
SORRY, AKANE... I DIDN'T MEAN TO DECEIVE YOU. BUT SINCE I AM AN ANDROID, I CAN'T LOVE YOUR HOICHI. FEEL BETTER NOW...?
SO YOU DIDN'T, AH, GET IT ON WITH GUN...?


CERTAINLY NOT! AND IF I HAD, YOU'D REMEMBER IT PERFECTLY, GIVEN THAT OUR MEMORIES ARE BEING SHARED...
OH, I SEE... BUT, WHAT IS THIS...? IT'S LIKE YOU'RE ME, A-AND I'M YOU, AND...
THE ENEMY'S VIRUS HIJACKS PERSONALITIES, AND THE ONLY WAY TO STOP IT WAS TO USE MY OWN COGNITIVE ANTIBODY SYSTEM... SO I'VE TEMPORARILY MERGED OUR PERSONALITIES.

SO, THEN... YOU *ARE* ME...?

YES... FOR *NOW.*

BUT... I CAN'T FEEL MY *BODY...*

THE ENEMY'S *SEIZED* YOUR PHYSICAL BODY, I'M AFRAID. I'VE CUT YOUR CONSCIOUS-NESS *LOOSE* FROM IT.

BUT MY NANO-MACHINES ARE *RECLAIMING* YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM EVEN AS WE SPEAK.

SO, YOU *MUST* BE STRONG AND *HOLD ON,* AKANE.

I... I *WILL,* ISAKA...

FSHOOOOM

HERE COME MASTER *HOICHI* AND MISTRESS *REIKO,* SIR!

GOOD!

EXECUTE *RECOVERY PLAN "S"...!*

PRO
WE'RE PICKING UP AN *AIRCRAFT* APPROACHING YOUR SECTOR... WE THINK IT'S THE *EXAXXION PILOT!*
IT'S HEADING *STRAIGHT* FOR THE PLATFORM THAT THE ROBOT SORTIED FROM!
IF THEY'RE PLANNING TO *RECOVER* HIM, THEY'LL *HAVE* TO OPEN A HATCH...
UNDER-STOOD, SIR! WE'LL *NAIL* THEM WHEN THEY DO!
SET UP *TARGET PRE-LOCKS!* I'M ASSIGNING *QUADRANTS* TO EACH OF YOUR SHIPS... *OPEN FIRE* THE *INSTANT* THAT SOMETHING OPENS!

PSHNKK
VMMM
VORPP
VREEE
RMBB RMBB RMBB RMBB
FWOOSH
SKRANG
OPEN FIRE! AND DISPATCH THE DRONES IN RAMMING MODE!
WE HAVE MOVEMENT IN ZONE THREE!
FSSHHHHH
VMMMMMMM
BOOM
BOOM

BZZAKK
WNNK
BOMF
VREEE
FSHH
WHKOOM
SHREEE
SKRASHH
WHKOOM
WHKOOM
CHOOM
PLATFORM SURFACE NOW CLEAR, SIR.
FINE WORK, LADIES.
HERE COMES ISAKA ...!

FSHOOM
FWOOOSH
FSSHHH
VRMMM
PSHNKK
VREEEE
HOICHI, MY BOY! HOW I'VE WAITED FOR THIS MOMENT!
KCHUNGG

MASTER HOSUKE!
I'VE BROUGHT THEM BOTH, SIR!
HOSUKE ...!
AND MY REIKO, TOO! HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE I'VE SEEN YOU IN THE LOVELY FLESH?
COME TO MY ARMS, YOU TWO!
GUN SET!
KCHAK

TO BE CONTINUED...!

AXXION

HRMM... NOT THE WARMEST OF GREETINGS, MY BOY.
A MANLY HUG WOULD'VE SUFFICED.
CANNON 50
GRANDPA! WHY DID YOU ABANDON AKANE?!
CANNON 5
DON'T SWEAT IT, LADDIE. ISAKA WILL TAKE CARE OF HER.
AND WHAT IF SHE CAN'T?
WELL, I GUESS BOY LOSES GIRL, THEN.
DO SOMETHING, DAMN IT! WHAT ABOUT ALL OF YOUR HOTSHOT TECHNOLOGY...?
CANNON 50
ISAKA'S LOADED WITH THE MOST ADVANCED SUITE OF HACKING SOFTWARE ON EARTH, LADDIE.
IF SHE CAN'T COUNTERACT THIS NANO-ATTACK BY THE 'FALDIES, NO ONE CAN.

BUT HEY, IF *THIS* GIRL DOESN'T *MAKE IT* YOU CERTAINLY WON'T *LACK FOR COMPANIONSHIP,* HOICHI. I CAN GET YOU GIRLS WITH ANY *FACE,* ANY *PERSONALITY,* ANY *BODY* YOU WANT.
I DO THE BEST *COSMETIC SURGERY* AND *BRAIN-WASHING* ON THE PLANET, AFTER ALL...
DON'T *SCREW* WITH ME, YOU *BASTARD!*

HOICHI! *STOP* THIS!
NO ONE CAN REPLACE AKANE--

HOSUKE IS YOUR *FATHER!*

HUH? WH-WHAT DO YOU *MEAN,* MOM...?
MY DAD *DIED* WHEN I WAS LITTLE... *DIDN'T* HE...?

HEY, REIKO WAS A *BABE* WITH *BRAINS,* LADDIE. I *HAD* TO TAKE HER FOR MYSELF.
MY SON *HOJI* WASN'T *HALF* THE MAN I AM, NEEDLESS TO SAY.

I USED HIM AS A *GUINEA PIG* TO TEST THE *GUNNER SUIT.* TOO BAD IT *KILLED HIM.*

KLIK
OLD MAN... YOU--!?
I LIKE YOUR SPIRIT, MY BOY...
KLIK KLIK
HOICHI ...!
?! HUH. ?
KLIK KLIK
...BUT DID YOU REALLY THINK THAT I'D FORGET TO PUT SAFE-GUARDS ON MY OWN WEAPONS?
NONE OF MY INVENTIONS CAN HARM ME! I DESIGNED 'EM THAT WAY, HOICHI!
GUNNER SUIT: STORAGE MODE!

FWAPP
WHSSH

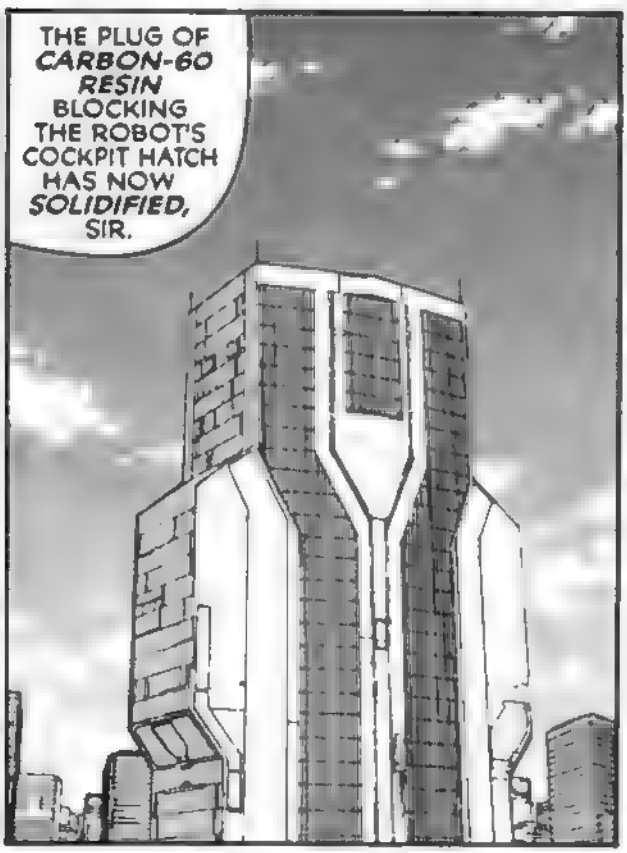
THDD
HOICHI!

YOU NEED TO COOL DOWN, SON.
SNAPP
TAKE A NAP, WHY DON'T YOU?

PSHT

NO...
DAMN IT..

VMMM MMMM


THE PLUG OF *CARBON-60 RESIN* BLOCKING THE ROBOT'S COCKPIT HATCH HAS NOW *SOLIDIFIED*, SIR.

EXCELLENT... AT LEAST NO ONE'S GETTING BACK ABOARD THAT MONSTER. NOW, WHAT ABOUT THE PILOT?
HIS VEHICLE LANDED BACK AT THE BASE THAT THE "EXAXXION" ROBOT SORTIED FROM, SIR.
THE FORCES WE DISPATCHED TO PURSUE HIM WERE WIPED OUT.
WELL, KEEP A DRONE STATIONED TO FURTHER BLOCK THAT HATCH.
IF WE CAN KEEP THE PILOT OUT OF THAT ROBOT'S COCKPIT, AND KEEP ITS ANTENNAE COATED SO IT CAN'T BE REMOTELY OPERATED, WE CONTROL THE FIELD!
WE'RE STILL TRYING TO HACK INTO THE ROBOT'S OPERATING SYSTEM, SIR... WITH NO SUCCESS, SO FAR.
KEEP AT IT.
ITS DEFENSIVE AI IS BLOCKING OUR EVERY MOVE.
DIDN'T MAJOR RYA'AM SAY THAT HE'D LINKED HIS NANOMACHINES' HOST TO THE ROBOT'S OPERATING SYSTEM...?
HIS MACHINES MUST HAVE FAILED, GIVEN THAT--
MY NANOS CERTAINLY HAVEN'T FAILED, I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW.
!
MAJOR RYA'AM ...?

JUST RETURNED FROM *SECURITY HQ*...
PATHETICALLY ENOUGH, THEIR SYSTEMS ARE *STILL* DOWN, AFTER THAT LAST BOMBARDMENT. SO I'LL BE USING *YOUR* FACILITY.
HQ'S GRANTED ME A *PRIORITY COMMAND OVERRIDE.* I'LL EXPECT *TOTAL* COOPERATION FROM YOUR PERSONNEL, *MAJOR PA'AFOS.*
GET THAT CONFIRMED... *NOW.*
YES, SIR.
THIS IS MY ASSISTANT, CAPTAIN *ZAIER'R.*
HONORED TO MEET YOU, MAJOR PA'AFOS.
THE PLEASURE IS, AH, *MINE.*
SO...ARE YOU SAYING THAT YOUR *NANOMACHINES* ARE STILL *OPERATIVE?*
SIR COMMAND OVERRIDE CONFIRMED.
OH, *YES,* OF COURSE. I RECEIVED A SIGNAL THAT THEY HAD COMMENCED *HACKING*...WHICH MEANS THEY WERE TOTALLY INTEGRATED INTO THEIR *HOST ORGANISM.*
GIVEN THE AVERAGE EFFICIENCY OF THE HUMAN CIRCULATORY SYSTEM, IT WILL TAKE ANOTHER *TWENTY HOURS,* AT THE VERY *LEAST,* FOR THE NANOMACHINES TO BE *PURGED* FROM HER BODY.
BUT...I THOUGHT THERE WAS *NO ONE LEFT* ON BOARD THE ROBOT, SIR...
CONSULT THE *SATELLITE RECONNAISSANCE* FILES, PLEASE, AND GIVE ME PLAYBACK OF *EACH TIME* THE PILOT'S VEHICLE ENTERED AND EXITED THE ROBOT'S COCKPIT.
YES, SIR...

KRK KRK

KRRM

CAN YOU USE THE *GRAVITIC SCAN* DATA TO CALCULATE THE *MASS* OF THE PILOT'S VEHICLE?

YES, SIR.

THEN ANALYZE THE VEHICLE'S MASS ON *EACH* SEPARATE OCCASION OF ENTRY OR EGRESS.

DONE, SIR! WE HAVE *FOUR* DIFFERENT PATTERN ANALYSES.

ITS MASS BEFORE FIRST ENTRY TO THE ROBOT: *212 KILOGRAMS.*

UPON EGRESS: *141* KILOGRAMS.

AFTER RETRIEVING THOSE *TWO SUSPECTS* FROM THE NEARBY ROOFTOP: *237* KILOGRAMS.

FINALLY, WHEN *OUTBOUND* FROM THE ROBOT AGAIN, BACK TOWARDS ITS SORTIE PLATFORM: *251* KILOGRAMS.

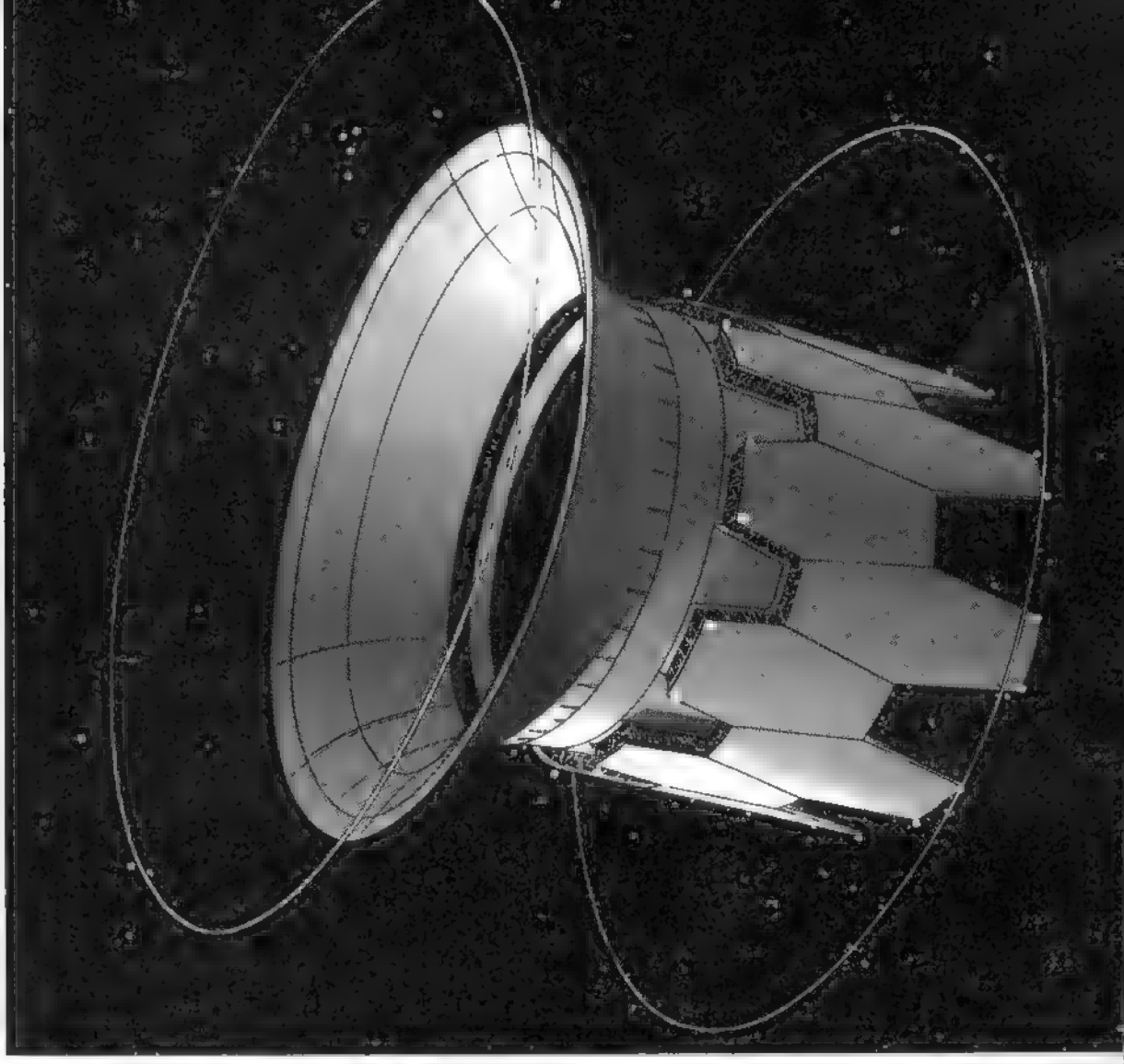
SO, THE *PILOT* MUST HAVE MASSED *71* KILOS...

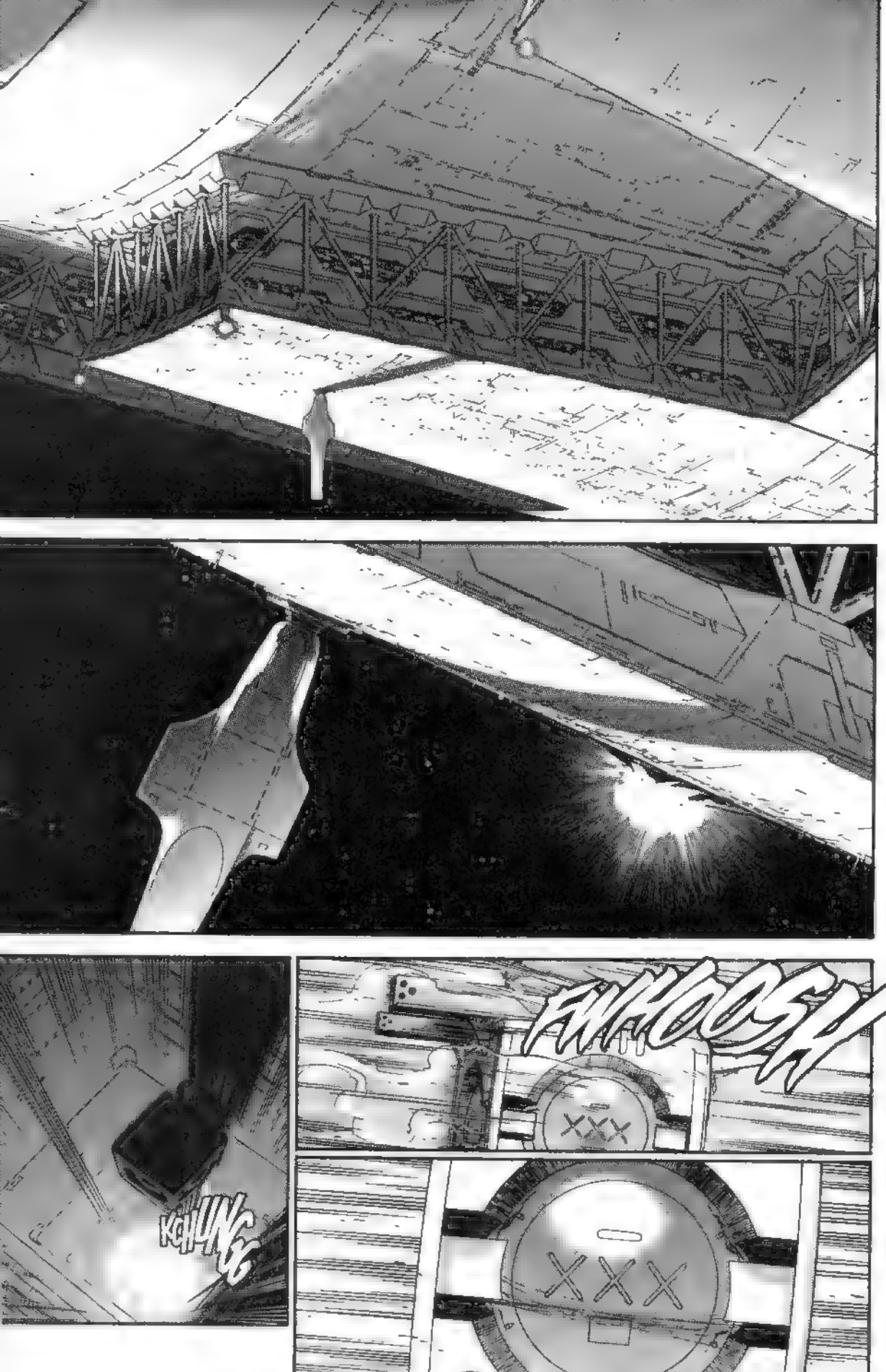
...AND THE TWO *RECOV-ERED SUSPECTS* TOTALLED *96* KILOS...

SEE? *ONE* SMALLER BODY MASS REMAINS ON BOARD THAT ROBOT...

...A MASS WHICH MATCHES THAT OF *AKANE HINO,* MY NANO-MACHINES' LITTLE *HOST.*

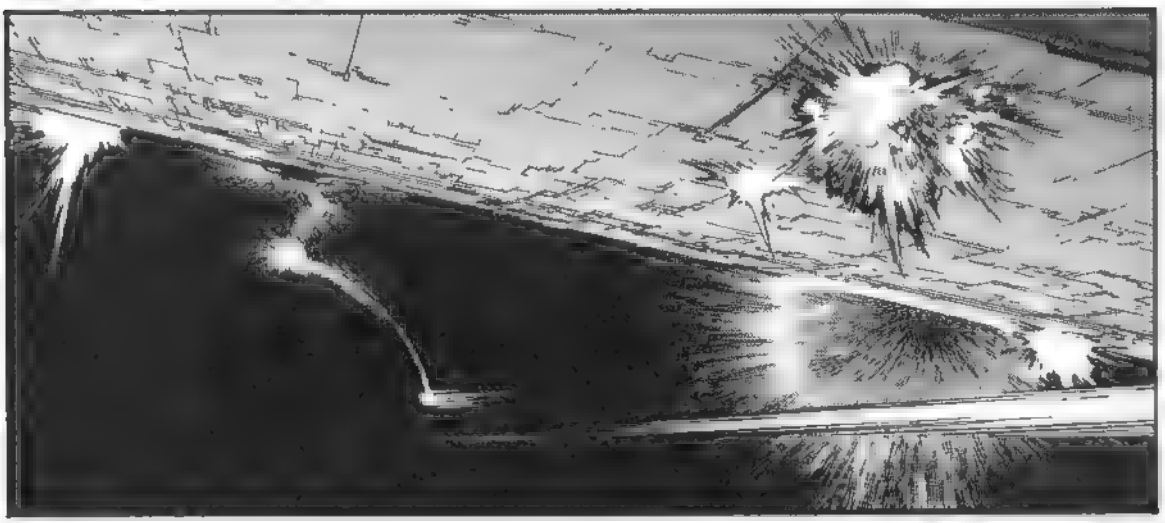
SO THEN...WE *HAVEN'T* FAILED!
INDEED. IN FACT, THIS IS ESSENTIALLY OUR *ONLY* REAL SUCCESS SO FAR.
BUT...WITH NO *RESPONSE* SO FAR, THAT MUST MEAN THE NANO-MACHINES ARE *MAL-FUNCTION-ING...*
DON'T BE *FOOLISH,* MAJOR.
THE *OBVIOUS* CONCLUSION IS THAT OUR TECHNOLOGY AND THAT OF WHOEVER DESIGNED EXAXXION APPEAR TO BE *EVENLY MATCHED.*
YET A *SINGLE INJECTION* OF MY NANOMACHINES RENDERED THAT MONSTER CURRENTLY *PILOTLESS.* A ROUND OF *APPLAUSE* MIGHT BE IN ORDER, HERE.
YES, WELL, WE'RE *THANKFUL* FOR THAT...BUT NOW IT'S UP TO *US* TO--
NO, IT *ISN'T* UP TO YOU. WE'VE NO NEED FOR ANY BOTCHED *ENTRY ATTEMPTS* ON THAT ROBOT. JUST MAINTAIN THE *STATUS QUO,* THANK YOU.
ARE YOU *CRAZY?!* THIS IS OUR *BEST* OPPOR-TUNITY TO--
GENERAL SHES'KA *ORDERED* THIS, MAJOR.
AS LONG AS THE ROBOT'S *DEFENSIVE AI* REMAINS OPERATIVE, THE GENERAL DOESN'T WANT ANY HALF-BAKED ATTEMPTS AT *INTERVENTION.*
AND IN THE *MEANTIME,* OUR SUPERIORS ARE BUILDING A *WEAPON* THAT CAN *DESTROY* THAT DAMNED THING.
THEY'RE *ACQUIRING* THE WEAPON'S *POWER SOURCE* AT THIS VERY MOMENT...

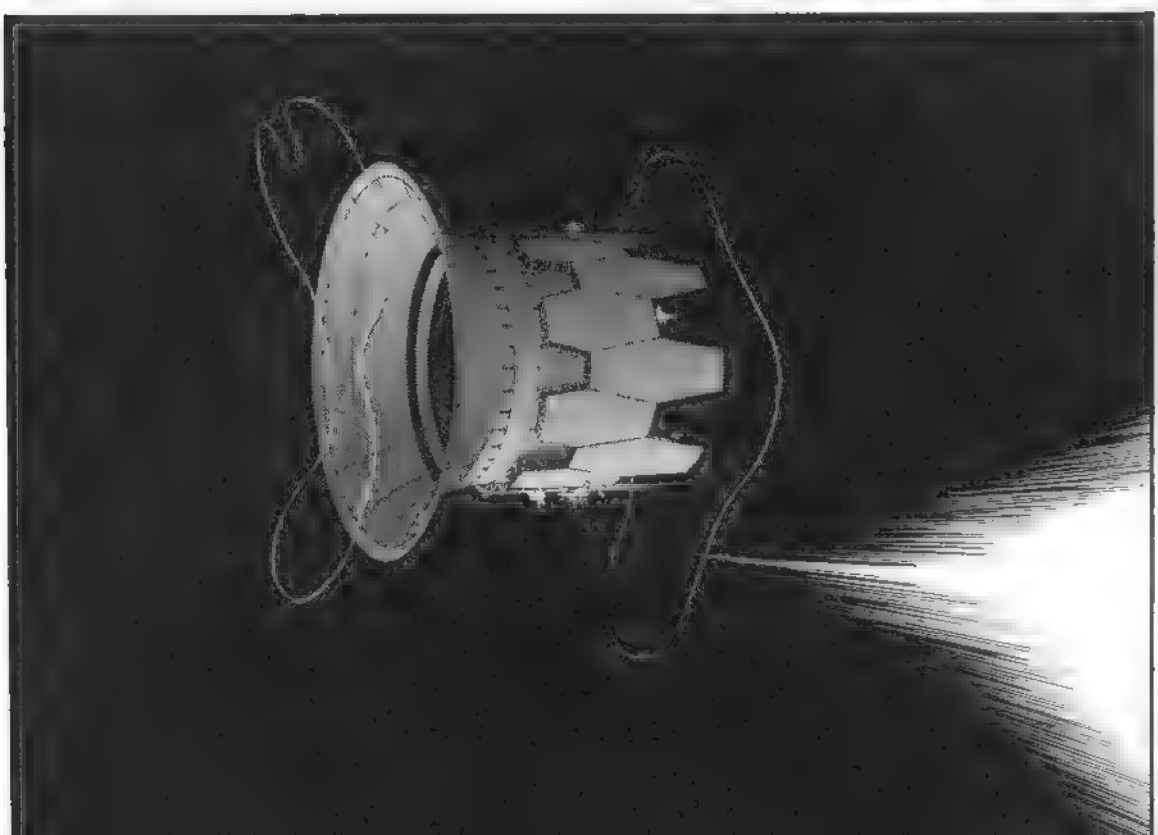


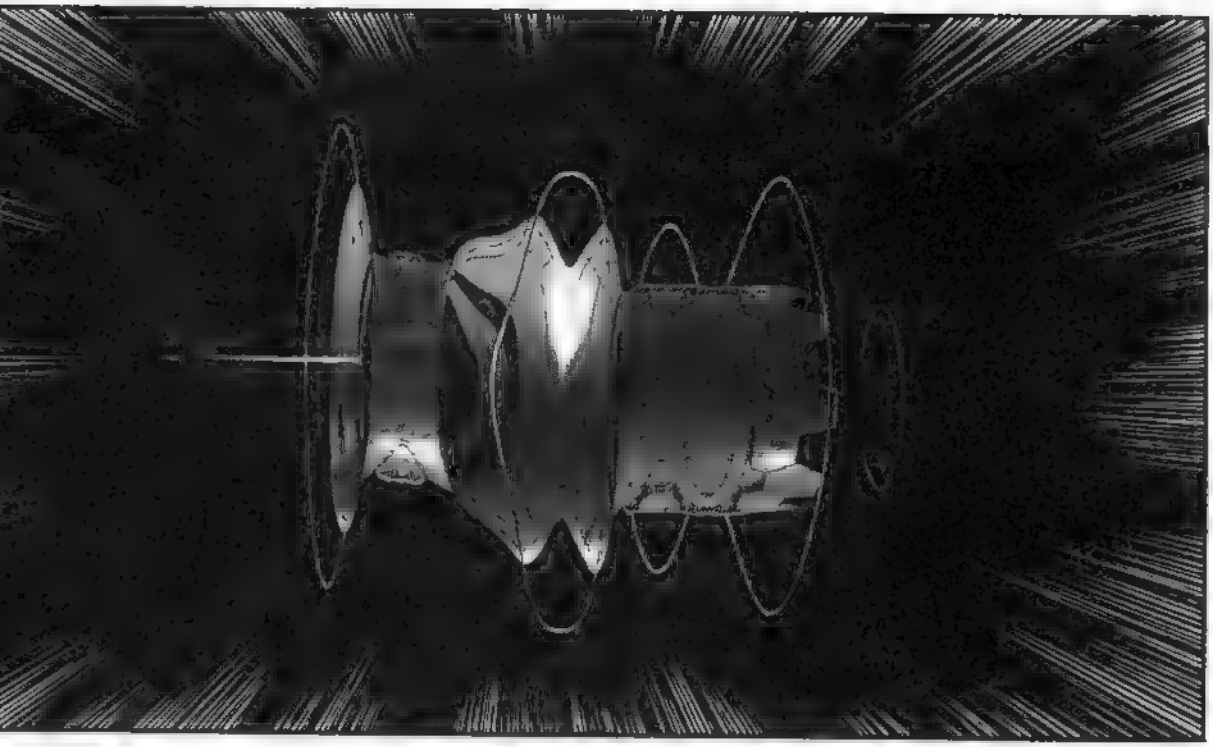

KCHUNG
FWOOSH

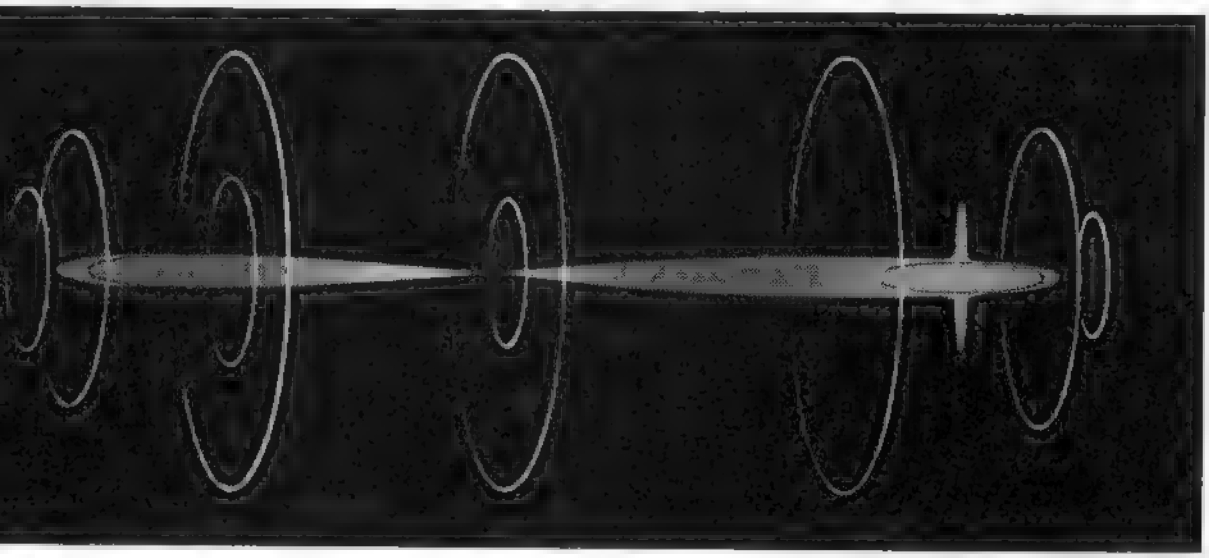
WHAT THE HELL IS COLONEL HULAN'KI DOING--?
SHE'S ACTIVATED THE CARGO TRANSFER SYSTEM, SIR, AND IS SENDING A PAYLOAD TO HER SHIP VIA GATE 41.
THE PAYLOAD IS NOW EN ROUTE... ITS CARGO CODE IS... "XXX" ...?!
WHAT? THEY'RE STEALING OUR XXX ANTI-MATTER UNIT?!
SHUT DOWN THE CARGO TRANSFER SYSTEM! USE MY ACCESS KEY!
ACTIVATE GATE 41'S EMERGENCY LOCKDOWN MODE BEFORE THE XXX UNIT CAN GET THERE!
BAMM
VREE
I CAN'T, SIR! COLONEL HULAN'KI'S ACCESS KEY HAS OVERRIDE STATUS!
WHAT THE HELL --?!
SIR... THE ONLY THING THAT COULD OVERRIDE A HOME-WORLD ENVOY KEY LIKE YOURS IS--
A SUPREME COM-MANDER'S KEY! THAT MEANS GENERAL SHES'KA MUST HAVE...
?! IS THIS A COUP D'ETAT?!
WELL, THE HOMEWORLD MUST HAVE RECEIVED OUR ALARM SIGNAL BY NOW!
THE MOMENT THAT THOSE BASTARDS CAST OFF, HAVE THE HOMEWORLD USE THEIR COMMAND KEY AND DETONATE THAT XXX UNIT!
NOT POSSIBLE, SIR! THEY MUST HAVE CUT THE HOMEWORLD TRANSMITTER LINK WHEN THEY BOARDED!
THEN HAVE THE SECTOR CREW JETTISON THE ENTIRE GATE 41 BLOCK MANUALLY!
YES, SIR!

ATTENTION, SECTOR FOUR STAFF! COME IN, SECTOR FOUR!
MANUALLY BLOW THE CONNECTORS AND JETTISON GATE 41'S BLOCK! DO YOU READ ME, SECTOR FOUR?
HERE COMES THE XXX UNIT...
GRNN
ARRIVAL CONFIRMED. NOW INITIATING CLEAN-UP OPERATION...
VRMMM
I'VE USED MY KEY TO OPEN ALL THE LOCKS TO OUR SHIP! HURRY, DAMN IT!
ROGER, COLONEL!
SIR! THE WORMHOLE'S NEGATIVE ENERGY WALLS ARE DESTABILIZING!
WHA--?
A SERIES OF CATASTROPHIC N-SPACE CONTROL ERRORS ARE CASCADING THROUGH THE UNIT'S CONTROL SYSTEM!









HYPER-
SPACE
GATE
COLLAPSE
CONFIRMED.
OPERATION
COMPLETE.

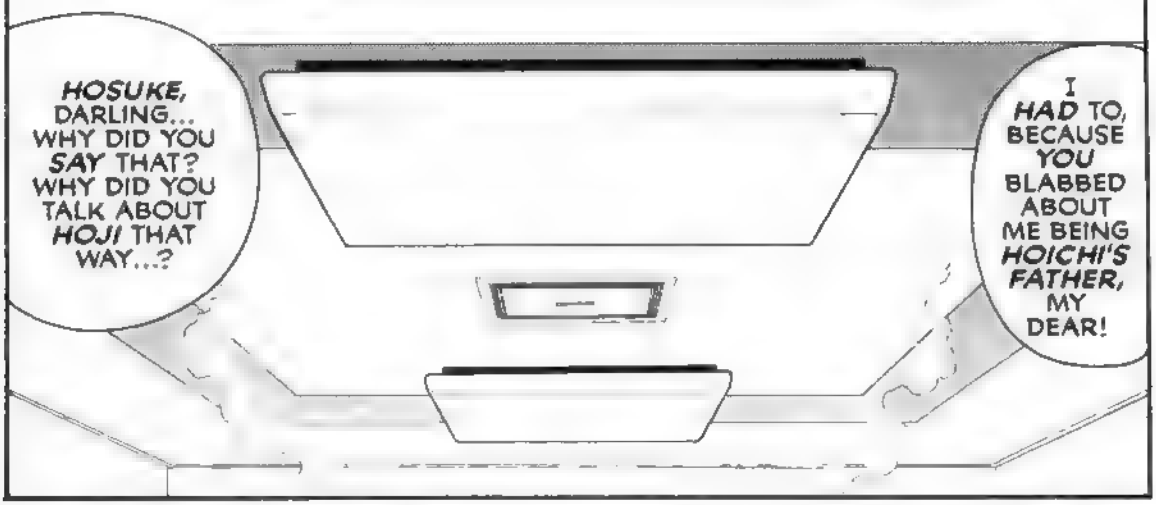
THE *XXX UNIT* IS STOWED ABOARD, COLONEL, AND ITS *SYSTEM CHECK* READS OPTIMALLY.

ALSO, WE'VE *CONFIRMED* THAT THE GATE PERSONNEL DIDN'T GET ANY *SIGNALS* THROUGH TO THE HOMEWORLD BEFORE THE WORMHOLE *COLLAPSED.*

GOOD!

THEY'LL NOTICE ITS DISAPPEARANCE *SOON ENOUGH...* BUT IT WILL TAKE THEM A GREAT DEAL OF TIME TO *RESTORE* THE GATE.

SIGNAL *GENERAL SHES'KA* THAT OUR MISSION IS *ACCOM-PLISHED!*


HOSUKE, DARLING... WHY DID YOU SAY THAT? WHY DID YOU TALK ABOUT HOJI THAT WAY...?
I HAD TO, BECAUSE YOU BLABBED ABOUT ME BEING HOICHI'S FATHER, MY DEAR!

WOULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN BETTER TO TELL HIM THE WHOLE TRUTH...?
HOICHI'S NOT GOING TO CURL UP AND DIE OVER SOME MINOR CRAP LIKE THIS, ALL RIGHT? YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT BETTER THAN ANYONE, REIKO, MY DEAR.

YES, BUT... YOU MADE IT SOUND AS IF, WELL...
...AS IF YOU KILLED HOJI ON PURPOSE ...!
HELL, I'LL SHOW HIM THE ORIGINAL FILES SOMEDAY, IF YOU WANT!

MASTER *HOSUKE* ...?

SURELY YOU DON'T MEAN THE SECURITY CAMERA RECORDINGS OF THE *GUNNER SUIT ACCIDENT?*

PROJECT EXAXXIO

YEAH *THOSE.* MUST'VE BEEN... WHAT? *TWELVE* OR *THIRTEEN* YEARS AGO, NOW?

OH? I NEVER KNEW THERE WERE RECORD-INGS!

YEAH! WE'VE NEVER *SEEN* THEM!

THAT WAS BEFORE WE WERE EVEN *MADE,* RIGHT?

WERE *YOU* HERE, RYOKO?

Y-YES, I *WAS*...IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT *ANYONE* HAD WORN THE GUNNER SUIT.

"I WAS *SO* MUCH YOUNGER THEN...IN EVERY WAY...

"HOJI USUALLY FOUGHT MASTER HOSUKE TOOTH AND NAIL OVER EVERYTHING...BUT WHEN HE HEARD ABOUT THE GUNNER SUIT TEST, HE VOLUNTEERED IMMEDIATELY.
"ALL OF THE REGULAR STAFF WERE GIVEN THE DAY OFF...ONLY THE THREE OF US WERE THERE FOR THE TRIAL.
KRKK
FSHHH
"THE SUIT'S FITTING WENT WITHOUT A HITCH...
FWOOSH
"...THE TEST SEEMED TO BE GOING PERFECTLY ...!
SNRKK
"BUT THEN...
"...WITH-OUT WARN-ING..."

SKRAAAG

KREEK

WHOA!

YOU ROTTEN BASTARD!

KRKK

KRKKK

SKRAKK

SNAPP

KKK

RYOKO! GET OUT OF HERE!

B-BUT...

JUST GO, DAMN IT!

Y-YES, SIR!

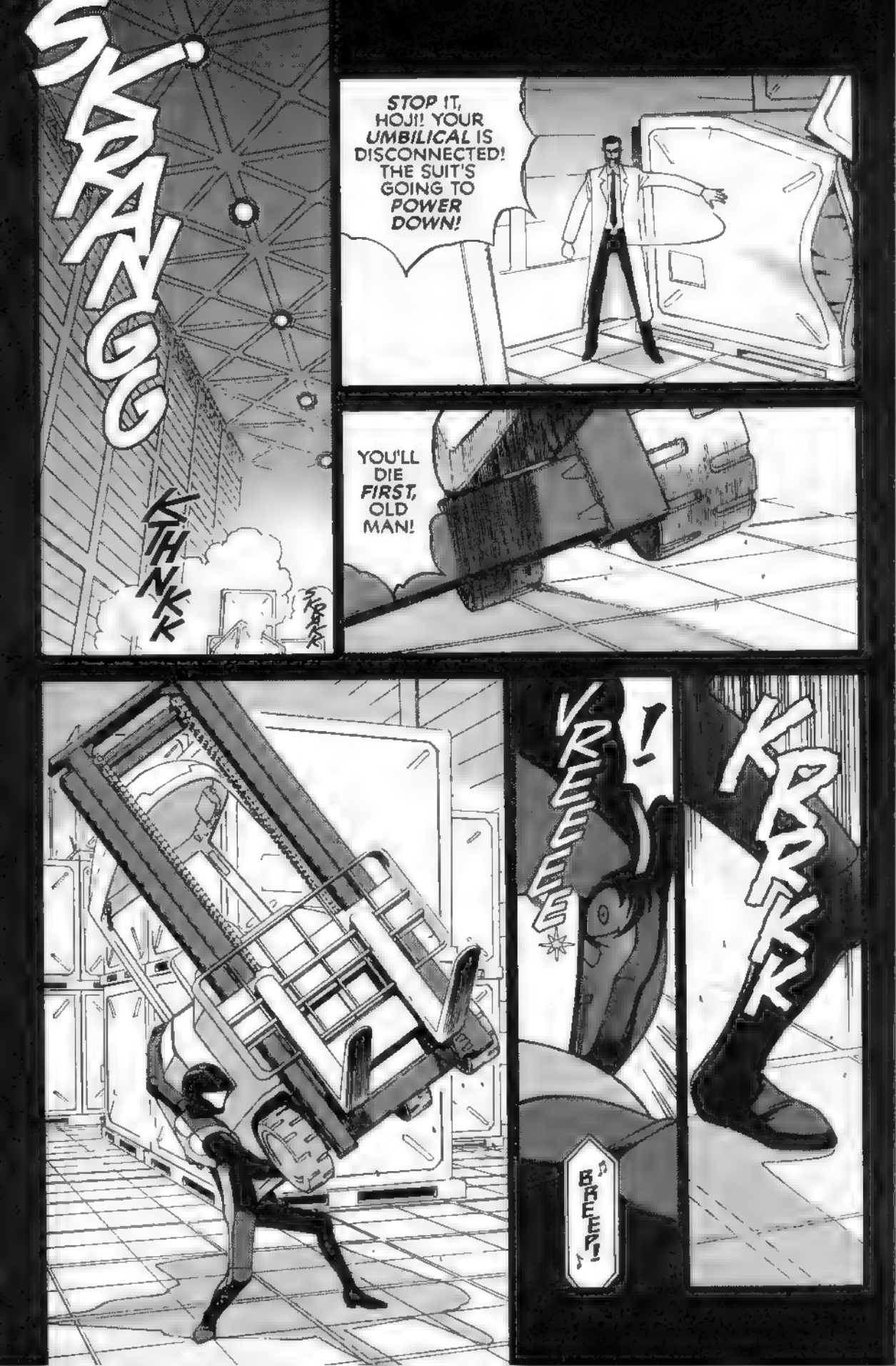
VREEP

KCHINGG

PSHKT

SKRAKK
KLONGG
FMPP
HOJI--
WAIT--!
SKRANGG
KRRKK
FWSHH
KLANGG
KHNKK
.....
.....
.....!
B-
BUT...
WHY
WAS
HE...?

LET ME TELL IT, RYOKO...
HOJI AND I WERE AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE BETWEEN VERY WEALTHY AND POWERFUL FAMILIES.
I WAS YOUNG...AND I DIDN'T HAVE THE NERVE TO REFUSE SUCH AN IMPORTANT, STRATEGIC ALLIANCE, SO I MARRIED HIM. BUT I NEVER LOVED HIM.
AND THEN, WHEN I GOT TO KNOW HIS FATHER HOSUKE, FOR THE FIRST TIME I FOUND SOMEONE THAT I COULD ADMIRE, SOMEONE WHO RESPECTED ME FOR MY SKILLS AND LOVED ME FOR MYSELF. HOJI AGREED TO THE DIVORCE, BUT HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE WOULD THINK... SO WE TOLD EVERYONE THAT WE WERE STILL HUSBAND AND WIFE, LIVING WITH HIS FATHER.
AND THE SITUATION CONTINUED THAT WAY, EVEN AFTER HOICHI WAS BORN...
BY THE END, HOJI'S TOLERANCE OF THE SITUATION HAD CHANGED TO RESENTMENT... HE WANTED TO PUNISH ME.
HEY, I TOLD HOJI THAT I COULD GET HIM ANY WOMAN HE WANTED...
...BUT HE PREFERRED TO SULK. GUESS THE POOR SAP SORT OF ENJOYED WALLOWING IN HIS RESENTMENT OF ME.
I DON'T STOP HIM FROM SPENDING MILLIONS OF MY MONEY THOUGH
I DON'T THINK HE MINDED LOSING HIS WIFE, PER SE...
...WHAT REALLY PISSED HIM OFF WAS LOSING HER TO ME.


SKRAZG
KTHNKK
STOP IT, HOJI! YOUR UMBILICAL IS DISCONNECTED! THE SUIT'S GOING TO POWER DOWN!
YOU'LL DIE FIRST, OLD MAN!
KRRKK
VREEEEE!
BEEP!

KLANGG
SPLUCHH
HOJ!!
WITHOUT POWER, THE GUNNER SUIT'S NOTHING BUT A SNAZZY COSTUME.
EVEN I COULDN'T SAVE MY SON.

HEY, WHAT ARE YOU ALL *MOPING* ABOUT?
THAT'S ALL *ANCIENT HISTORY,* LADIES! AND TONIGHT'S MEAL IS *HERE* AND *NOW!*
REIKO AND HOICHI ARE *BACK,* SAFE AND SOUND... SO LET'S *CELEBRATE,* EH?
KLIK
--THE DEATH COUNT STANDS AT FOUR HUNDRED AND RISING.
FOS
VOL.
FOS NEWS
AND NOW, LET'S GO TO OUR REPORTER KYOKO HAMADA, WHO'S BEEN FOLLOWING EXAXXION'S "TRAIL OF TERROR" IN OUR FOS NEWS CHOPPER...
FOS

HAMADA HERE! WE'RE FLYING OVER THE ROBOT'S FOOT-PRINTS AT THIS VERY MOMENT...

THE DESTRUC-TION IS UNBELIEVABLE... THE ENTIRE FREEWAY IS PEELED UP, WITH COUNTLESS AUTOMOBILES FLUNG FAR AND WIDE!

MANY CARS STILL CONTAIN VICTIMS WAITING RESCUE...

MY GOD...LOOK AT THAT BUS! BLOOD IS STREAMING OUT FROM ITS BROKEN WINDOWS!

KLIK

THE GOVERNMENT HAS INVOKED THE EMERGENCY TERROR PREVEN-TION LAW, AND IS OFFERING CASH REWARDS FOR INFORMATION ON ANY MEMBER OF THE KANO FAMILY...

KLIK

DAMAGE REPORTS ARE POURING IN FROM THE NAKANO AREA, WHICH RECEIVED THE FULL FORCE OF THE ROBOT'S ELECTRO-MAGNETIC PULSE...

KLIK

♪ RICH AND THICK! RIO-JUICE... IT'S NATURALLY PULPY! ♪

KLIK

THE RIOFALDIAN GOVERNMENT WILL NEVER STAND FOR EXAXXION'S RAMPAGE OF HORRENDOUS DESTRUC-TION!

KLIK

FUNERAL SERVICES FOR THE JAPANESE SDF SOLDIERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY WILL BE--

ME? I THINK THAT IF WE REALLY WANT PEACE, WE SHOULD COOPERATE WITH THE RIOFALDIANS--

KLIK

"TALK ATTACK-- BREAK-FAST IN ORBIT!" RETURNS IN JUST A--

--SO THEN, IT'S **POINTLESS** TO FIGHT BACK WITH ONLY A **SINGLE ROBOT,** YOU'RE SAYING?

ABSOLUTELY, ANNE! THIS KID MAY BELIEVE THAT HE'S SOME KIND OF **HERO,** BUT IF HE THINKS THAT A **LONE MECHA** CAN DEFEAT THE **RIOFALDIANS** AFTER THEY'VE ALREADY **CONQUERED** THE ENTIRE PLANET, HE'S CLEARLY **DELUSIONAL!**

THERE SEEMS TO BE A **LUNATIC FRINGE** THAT STILL SUPPORTS THE SO-CALLED "**BLACK ANGEL,**" BUT SPEAKING **OBJECTIVELY,** THIS CRUSADE IS **PATENTLY** INSANE! WE NEED TO ACCEPT--

PLINKK

GOD DAMN IT!

WHRAKK

JUST JUST WANTED TO BE A HERO...

NOK NOK

COME IN.

I BROUGHT YOU ***DIN-DIN,*** MASTER HOICHI!

RYOKO MADE THE *TASTIEST* DINNER FEAST...YOU *REALLY* SHOULD HAVE JOINED US...!

LIKE *HELL* I'LL EAT WITH THAT *FILTHY BASTARD!*

MASTER HOSUKE JUST WANTS YOU TO BE A *HERO* FOR ALL OF US, MASTER HOICHI...

HERO? WHO THE HELL'S A *HERO?!*

ME...*EXAXXION*... EVEN *YOU*, ISAKA... WE'RE ALL *PUPPETS* BEING JERKED AROUND BY THAT *CREEP...!*

I KILLED *HUNDREDS* OF PEOPLE... AND I COULDN'T EVEN SAVE *AKANE!*

YOU CALL *THAT* BEING A *HERO?!*

SKRASSH

A HERO SAVES HIS GIRL! SAVES THE EARTH!
A HERO GETS RESPECT! EVERYONE LOVES HIM!
I HATE THIS! I--
BUT, MASTER HOICHI... WE CAN DEFINITELY RESCUE AKANE WITHIN SIXTEEN HOURS.
WE JUST FINISHED RUNNING THE SIMULATION.
HUH ...?
WHEN WE EVACUATED THE COCKPIT, I BROUGHT ALONG A SAMPLE OF THE ENEMY NANO-MACHINES FOR ANALYSIS.

WE'RE *VERY* CONFIDENT THAT AKANE CAN BE *RESCUED* AS SOON AS MY ORIGINAL SELF HAS *FREED* HER FROM THE HOSTILE NANOS!

AND GUESS WHAT? ONLY *YOU* CAN DO IT, MASTER HOICHI.

ALL, RIGHT, I'LL *GO!* FOR *AKANE!*

BUT AFTER THAT, I'M *FINISHED!* FOR *GOOD!*

AS YOU WISH, MASTER! ♥

TO BE CONTINUED...!

CHARACTER PROFILE:
NORIKO ASAGIRI

ANDROID

AGE: 26
BIRTHDAY: JULY 7
HEIGHT: 5'7"
CHEST
(measured around breasts): 40"
CHEST
(measured underneath breasts): 28"
WAIST: 24"
HIPS: 34"
WEIGHT: 128 lbs

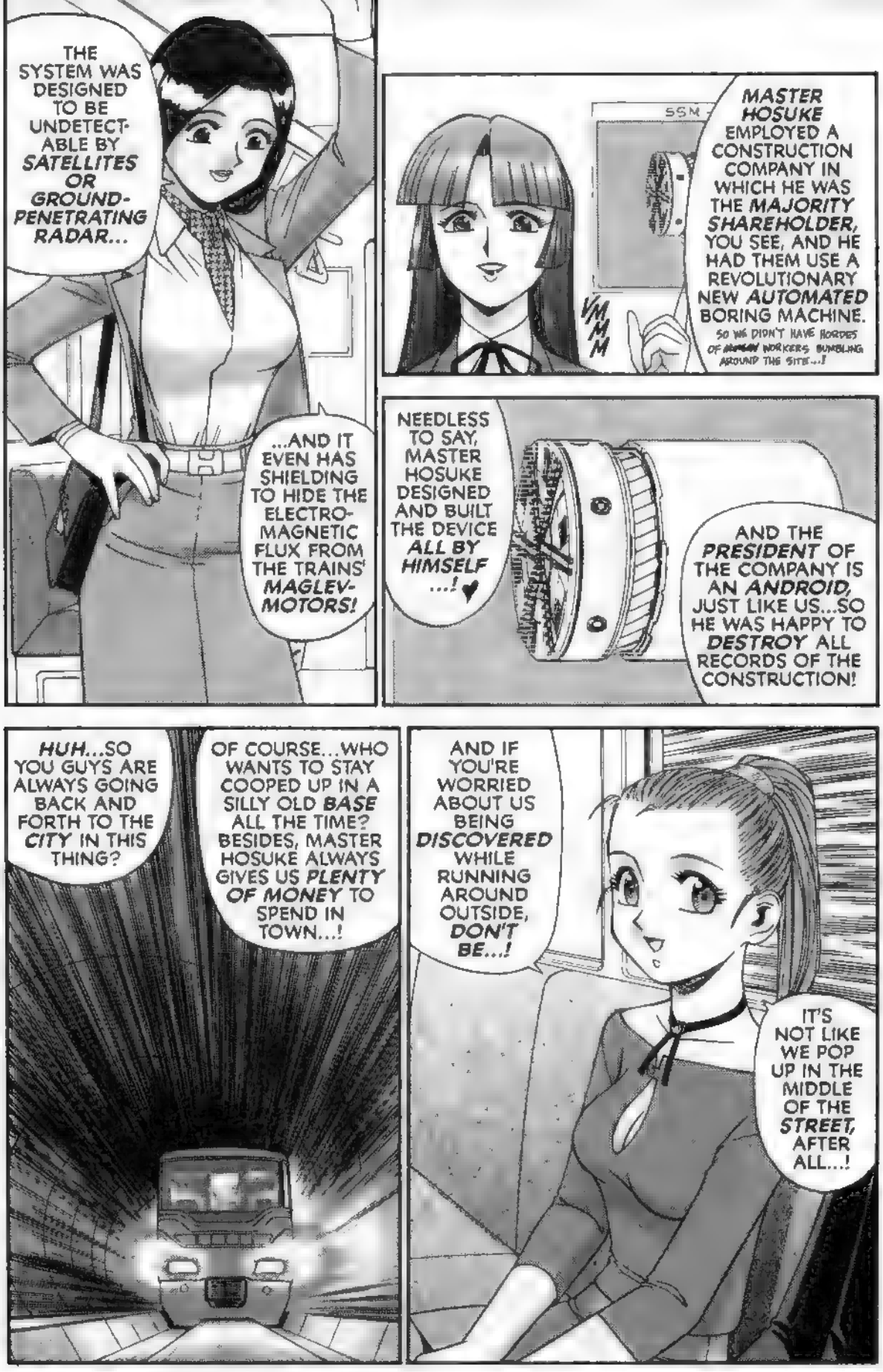
*(Named with a nod to the Chinese firearms manufacturer **Norinco**.)*

A self-proclaimed **"super-hacker"** and the top digital expert among the "**Hosuke Sisters**," Noriko is responsible for most of the operation's disinformation-tasked computer graphics.

3.6
GANTZ GOD EXAMINE: STAGE 3.6

MASTER HOICHI...DID YOU SLEEP ADEQUATELY LAST NIGHT...?
HUH? OH, YEAH, JUST FINE...
BUT I GOTTA ASK...WHY THE HELL DID YOU GUYS HAVE TO BUILD YOUR OWN SUBWAY ...?
WELL, FOR ONE THING, THIS COMPLEX IS DESIGNED TO DOUBLE AS A SHELTER IF SOMETHING EVER HAPPENS TO OUR MAIN BASE.
AT THE MOMENT, THE SYSTEM IS ONLY USED TO TRANSPORT US AND WHATEVER SUPPLIES WE NEED...

...BUT IN AN EMERGENCY, IT HAS ENOUGH FOOD, WATER, ENERGY, AND SPACE TO HOUSE TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE!
AND LISTEN TO THIS...THE SYSTEM IS DOUBLE-TRACKED, SO WE CAN RUN OVERSIZED TRAINS STRADDLING BOTH TRACKS WHEN WE NEED TO MOVE PIECES OF MEGA-SCALE EQUIPMENT!
YOU SEE, HOICHI, WE HAD TO STOP USING SURFACE TRANSPORTATION WELL OVER TEN YEARS BEFORE THE ALIENS ARRIVED, IN ORDER TO KEEP OUR BASE A SECRET...
YEAH, BUT WOULDN'T ALL THE DIGGING AND CONSTRUCTION HAVE BEEN A DEAD GIVEAWAY? WOULDN'T SOME BLABBER-MOUTH CONTRACTOR HAVE LET SOMETHING SLIP?

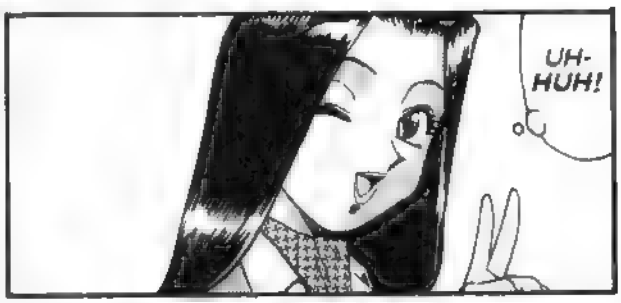

THE SYSTEM WAS DESIGNED TO BE UNDETECT-ABLE BY SATELLITES OR GROUND-PENETRATING RADAR...
...AND IT EVEN HAS SHIELDING TO HIDE THE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FLUX FROM THE TRAINS' MAGLEV-MOTORS!
SSM
MASTER HOSUKE EMPLOYED A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IN WHICH HE WAS THE MAJORITY SHAREHOLDER, YOU SEE, AND HE HAD THEM USE A REVOLUTIONARY NEW AUTOMATED BORING MACHINE.
SO WE DIDN'T HAVE HORDES OF HUMAN WORKERS BUMBLING AROUND THE SITE...!
VMMM
NEEDLESS TO SAY, MASTER HOSUKE DESIGNED AND BUILT THE DEVICE ALL BY HIMSELF ...!
AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY IS AN ANDROID, JUST LIKE US...SO HE WAS HAPPY TO DESTROY ALL RECORDS OF THE CONSTRUCTION!
HUH...SO YOU GUYS ARE ALWAYS GOING BACK AND FORTH TO THE CITY IN THIS THING?
OF COURSE...WHO WANTS TO STAY COOPED UP IN A SILLY OLD BASE ALL THE TIME? BESIDES, MASTER HOSUKE ALWAYS GIVES US PLENTY OF MONEY TO SPEND IN TOWN...!
AND IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT US BEING DISCOVERED WHILE RUNNING AROUND OUTSIDE, DON'T BE...!
IT'S NOT LIKE WE POP UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET, AFTER ALL...!

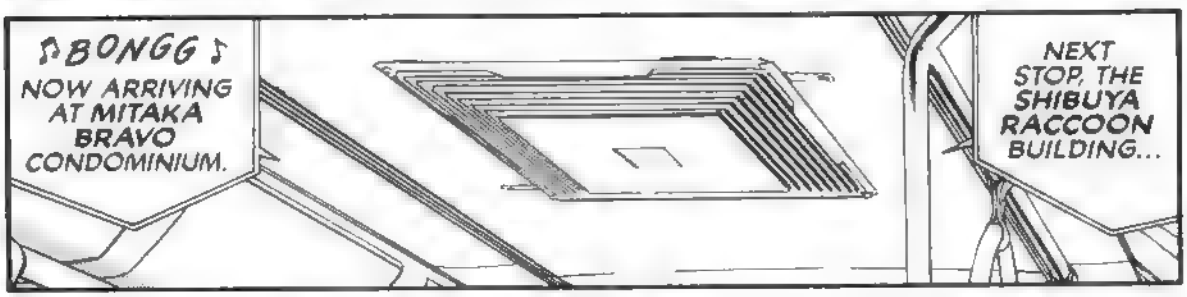
IT'S ALL VERY SIMPLE, AND VERY SAFE... WE JUST TRADE PLACES WITH OUR DOUBLES.
HUH ...?
THAT'S RIGHT, OUR DOUBLES...THERE ARE MANY ANDROIDS LIKE ISAKA LIVING AND WORKING IN TOKYO AS COVER FOR US...!
THEN...YOU MEAN GRANDPA'S PLANTED ALL KINDS OF ANDROIDS OUT THERE AS ALIBIS FOR YOU...?
EXACTLY ...!
MASTER HOSUKE THOUGHT OF EVERY THING...
THE EASIEST WAY TO FIND A SECRET FACILITY WOULD BE TO TRACE ITS PERSONNEL, WOULDN'T IT?
BUT...WHAT IF THE 'FALDIES DO DISCOVER ALL THIS...?
WELL, THEN, WE'LL SELF-DESTRUCT THE SUBWAY SYSTEM, AND HOLE UP BACK IN THE MAIN BASE, WON'T WE?
....
....
....
WE HAVE ENOUGH FOOD, DRINK, AND PLEASURE SOFTWARE TO LAST A LIFETIME, YOU KNOW...

SO TELL US, MASTER HOICHI... WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO YOUR SCHOOL ...?
DON'T YOU WANT TO RESCUE MISS AKANE FIRST?
YES! DO TELL, PLEASE! YOU'LL JUST CAUSE A PANIC THERE, AND HAVE TO RUN AWAY, WON'T YOU?
HMM...WE COULD USE MY NANO-MATERIAL TO DISGUISE HIM...
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANT TO DO AT THE SCHOOL ...?
IS IT A GIRL? WERE YOU SNEAKING AROUND ON AKANE ...?
IF THAT'S THE PROBLEM, WE'D LOVE TO BE OF ASSISTANCE, MASTER ...!
FMPP
FMPP
THE BASE HAS ENOUGH ROOM, YOU'LL FIND...
...FOR ALL YOUR FAVORITE LADIES ...!

IT'S...IT'S NOT *LIKE* THAT...I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHAT MY *CLASS-MATES* THINK ABOUT ME AND *EXAXXION*, OKAY? AND I DON'T WANNA HEAR IT FROM THE *MEDIA*, OR OVER THE *NET*...!
I WANNA HEAR *DIRECTLY* FROM THEM, YOU KNOW?
CANNON
I JUST WANT TO *HEAR* WHAT THEY *THINK*, BEFORE I PILOT *EXAXXION* AGAIN...
AH, *PARDON*, MASTER HOICHI... BUT WEREN'T YOU PLANNING TO *QUIT* AFTER RESCUING AKANE...?
LISTEN... MISS *ASAGIRI*, RIGHT?
PLEASE... CALL ME *NORIKO*.
WHO WOULD *GRANDPA* STICK INTO *EXAXXION* IF I QUIT?
WELL, I'M NOT *SURE*...
...BUT I *DO* KNOW THAT THE NEW PILOT *WOULDN'T* BE A *HOICHI* WITH A MIND OF HIS OWN... PERHAPS *LITERALLY*...

HE'S CRACK-ING, NORIKO!


UH-HUH!


♪BONGG♪
NOW ARRIVING AT MITAKA BRAVO CONDOMINIUM.
NEXT STOP, THE SHIBUYA RACCOON BUILDING...

OUR SUBWAY STATIONS ALL OPEN INTO SECRET BASEMENTS UNDER BUILDINGS OWNED BY MASTER HOSUKE, OF COURSE...!
SHOOM

都立豊和高等学

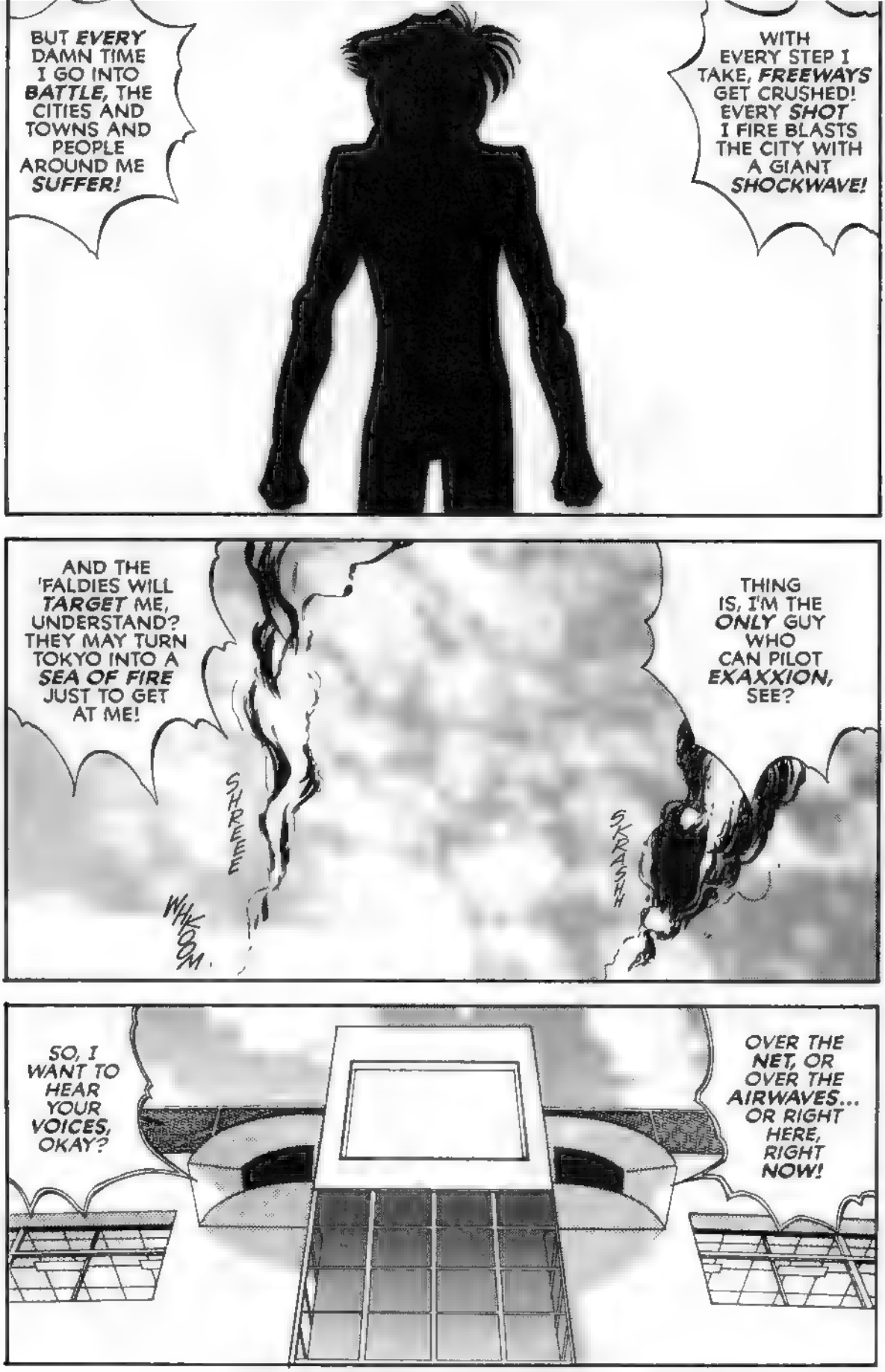
SKRANGG
FWSHH
SPANGG SPANGG
SPANGG SPANGG
SKRAKK

OOOOHHHH!
EEK!
WHDD
EVERY-BODY DOWN!
FWHIP
KCHAK
CANNON 50
KCHOOM
KCHOOM
WHROOM!

SPAK SPAK
VORPP
!!
!!
FSHOOM
BKOOM
DID WE GET HIM--?!
UH... BETTER CALL FOR BACK-UP--
KCHOOM
KCHOOM

HEY! ISN'T THAT KANO KICKING ASS OUT THERE--?
WHAAAT ...? ARE YOU SURE ...?
HE JUST WASTED THOSE 'FALDIES! HARSH, MAN!
KWSHH
MASTER HOICHI, I'VE OCCUPIED THE SCHOOL'S COMMUNICATIONS ROOM. I'M CUTTING ALL THE OUTSIDE LINKS AND CONNECTING YOU DIRECTLY TO THE INTERCOM SYSTEM.
RIGHT!
KCHAK
PSHINK

LISTEN UP, EVERY-BODY!
CAN YOU GUYS HEAR ME? I'M HOICHI KANO, FROM CLASS 1-A!
EXAXXION
I'M THE PILOT OF THAT GIANT ROBOT, ALL RIGHT?
I'M THE GUY WHO'S BEEN SHOOTING THAT BIG CANNON OVER IN NAKANO!
THIS EXAXXION SUCKER IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO STOP THE RIOFALDIANS, RIGHT?
I'VE SMASHED TWO OF THEIR GIANT ROBOTS ALREADY!
AND I TOOK OUT ONE OF THEIR GODDAMNED HUMAN PROCESSING PLANTS, TOO!
IF I KEEP ON FIGHTING, I MIGHT JUST BE ABLE TO BEAT THOSE ALIEN BASTARDS!


BUT EVERY DAMN TIME I GO INTO BATTLE, THE CITIES AND TOWNS AND PEOPLE AROUND ME SUFFER!
WITH EVERY STEP I TAKE, FREEWAYS GET CRUSHED! EVERY SHOT I FIRE BLASTS THE CITY WITH A GIANT SHOCKWAVE!
AND THE 'FALDIES WILL TARGET ME, UNDERSTAND? THEY MAY TURN TOKYO INTO A SEA OF FIRE JUST TO GET AT ME!
SHREEE
WHOOM
THING IS, I'M THE ONLY GUY WHO CAN PILOT EXAXXION, SEE?
SKRASHH
SO, I WANT TO HEAR YOUR VOICES, OKAY?
OVER THE NET, OR OVER THE AIRWAVES... OR RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW!

I GOTTA KNOW--DO YOU WANT ME TO *STOP* USING EXAXXION, AND *DOOM* ALL OF HUMANITY TO *SLAVERY?*
OR DO YOU WANT TO *GAMBLE* ON THE CHANCE THAT I CAN *WIN,* EVEN IF SOME PEOPLE GET *KILLED* IN THE PROCESS?
OR, HELL, D'YOU HAVE SOME *BETTER* IDEAS...?
LET ME *HEAR YOU,* DAMN IT!
AH, *CRAP...*
...NOW I SOUND JUST LIKE MY FREAKIN' *GRANDPA...*

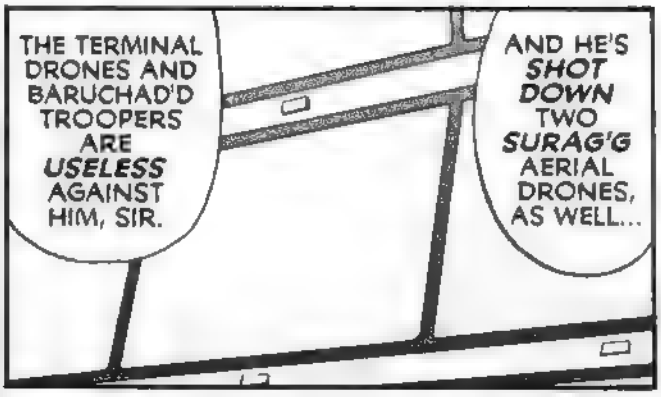
CHARACTER PROFILE:
SIERRA BARRETT

AGE: 19
BIRTHDAY: SEPT. 18
HEIGHT: 5'2"
CHEST
(measured around breasts): 36"
CHEST
(measured underneath breasts): 24"
WAIST: 20"
HIPS: 32"
WEIGHT: 95 lbs

(*Named with a nod to the ammunition manufacturer **Sierra Bullets**.*)

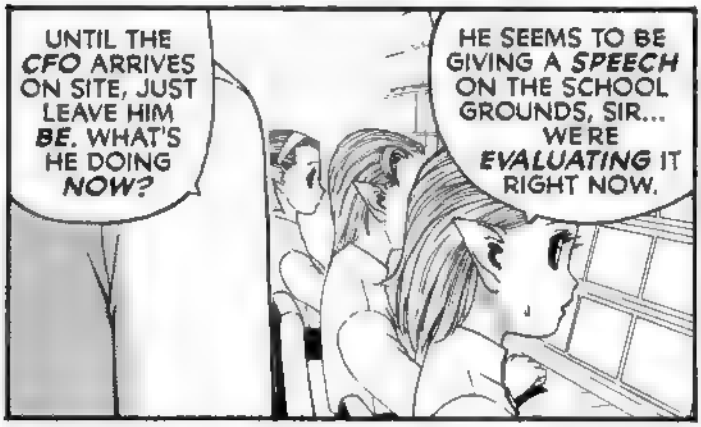
Unlike most of the other "**Hosuke sisters,**" Sierra is actually a human being and **not** a nanoassembled android. A precocious genius, she skipped high school to go directly into college and earn a Ph.D. Given that she's both the daughter of the president of a major steel manufacturer **and** a real beauty, it's no surprise that Hosuke couldn't keep his hands off of her. He's planted an android double of Sierra in her father's company, enabling both original and duplicate to contribute simultaneously to the Exaxxion project. Before Exaxxion was activated for combat, she would often switch places with her double to enjoy time with her family.

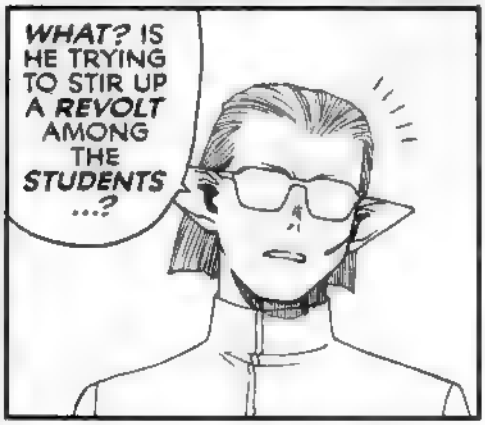
YOU'VE FOUND THE *PILOT?*
YES, SIR! HE JUST *APPEARED* THREE MINUTES AGO, AT *HOWA* HIGH SCHOOL IN MUSASHINO CITY!
I'VE *REPLAYED* THE SATELLITE SURVEILLANCE FEED FOR THAT SECTOR AGAIN AND AGAIN, BUT I CAN'T FIGURE OUT *HOW* HE GOT THERE...


THE TERMINAL DRONES AND BARUCHAD'D TROOPERS ARE *USELESS* AGAINST HIM, SIR.
AND HE'S *SHOT DOWN* TWO *SURAG'G* AERIAL DRONES, AS WELL...

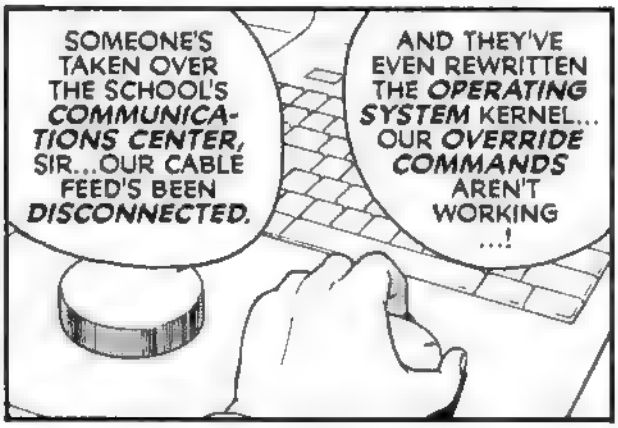
I'LL DIVERT THE NEAREST *CFO,* SIR.
THIS IS OUR *CHANCE,* DAMN IT...HE'S FINALLY OUT OF THAT *ROBOT!* DISPATCH A SHIP WITH A HIGH-YIELD *GRAVITY CRANE* TO THE SCENE *IMMEDIATELY!*

*CFO: COMMERCIAL FLYING OBJECT


UNTIL THE *CFO* ARRIVES ON SITE, JUST LEAVE HIM *BE.* WHAT'S HE DOING *NOW?*
HE SEEMS TO BE GIVING A *SPEECH* ON THE SCHOOL GROUNDS, SIR... WE'RE *EVALUATING* IT RIGHT NOW.



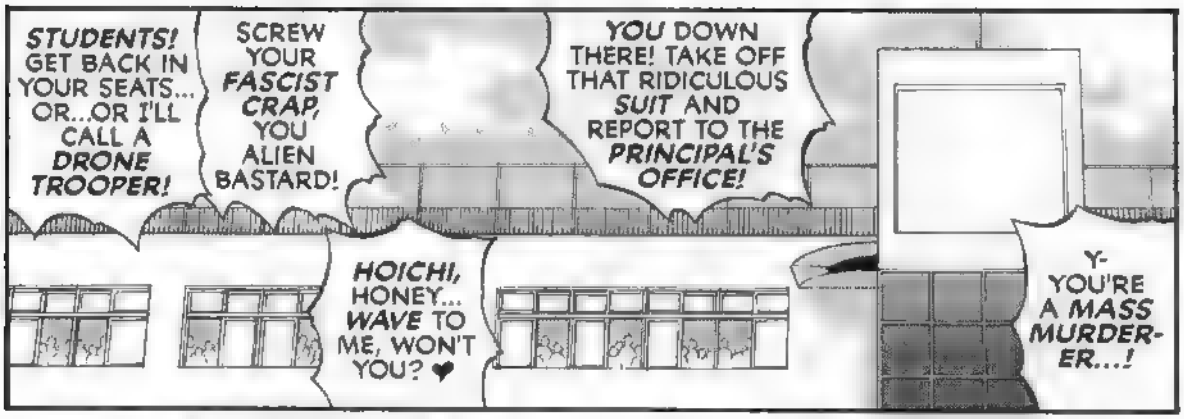
HE *SHOT DOWN* THE LOCAL COMMUNICATION CONTROL *SURAG'G* FOR THAT SECTOR, SIR. WE DON'T HAVE *ANY* WAY TO *SILENCE* HIM.
CAN'T WE GO THROUGH THE *GROUND* COMM LINES?


SOMEONE'S TAKEN OVER THE SCHOOL'S *COMMUNICATIONS CENTER,* SIR...OUR CABLE FEED'S BEEN *DISCONNECTED.*
AND THEY'VE EVEN REWRITTEN THE *OPERATING SYSTEM* KERNEL... OUR *OVERRIDE COMMANDS* AREN'T WORKING ...!

HAVE ONE OF OUR *ASSETS* AT THE SCHOOL REPORT IN BY *TELEPHONE,* THEN!
YES, *SIR!*
I'M *LISTENING* TO ALL OF YOU, UNDER-STAND?
EXAXXION
I'M GETTING A LIVE FEED FROM EVERY *CAMERA* AND *MICRO-PHONE* ON CAMPUS!
AND I'M RIGGED UP WITH *SOFTWARE TOOLS* THAT CAN RECOGNIZE *INDIVIDUAL VOICES,* OKAY?
IS THAT REALLY *KANO ...?*
THOSE NEWS STORIES WERE *TRUE?!*
SO THEN, IT REALLY *WAS* HIM IN THAT ROBOT?
AWESOME, MAN! REMEMBER THE WAY HE *TOOK OUT* THAT DRILL-ARMED 'FALDIE ROBOT *HAND-TO-HAND?*
HEY, *QUICK!* SOMEBODY GET A *CAMERA!*

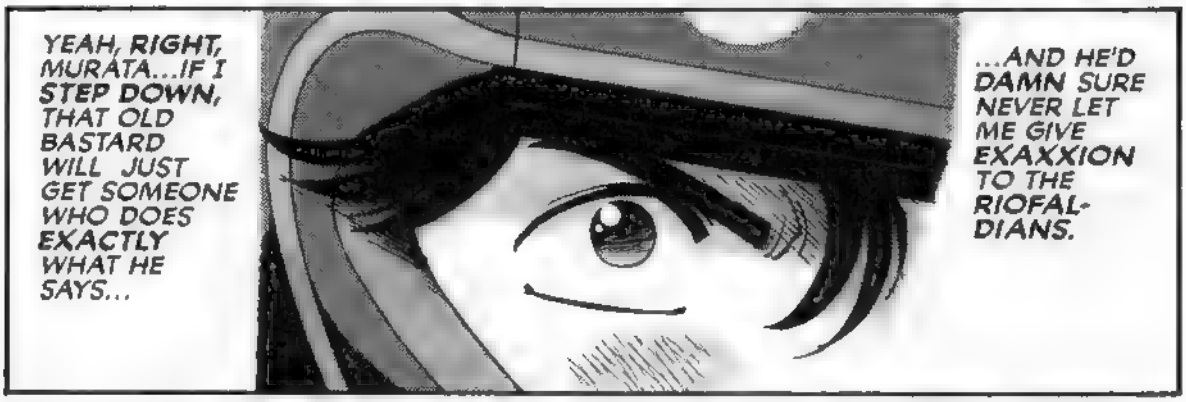
!
MISS KIN'BA...
MASTER HOICHI ...?
YOUR SCHOOL HAS EXCELLENT MICROPHONES AND CAMERAS... IT'LL BE A SNAP TO ANALYZE YOUR CLASSMATES' REACTIONS.
WHEN I PICK UP ANY STUDENT OFFERING A USEFUL OPINION, I'LL PULL HIS OR HER VOICE OUT OF THE CROWD NOISE, AND FEED IT TO YOU WITH A SEVEN-SECOND TIME LAG.
I'LL RECORD AND ARCHIVE ALL THE SOUND AND IMAGES, FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.
WARN ME IF ANY MORE RIOFALDIAN FORCES SHOW UP, OKAY?
OF COURSE, MASTER.
I DON'T WANT MY SCHOOL TO END UP AS ANOTHER RUINED BATTLEGROUND...

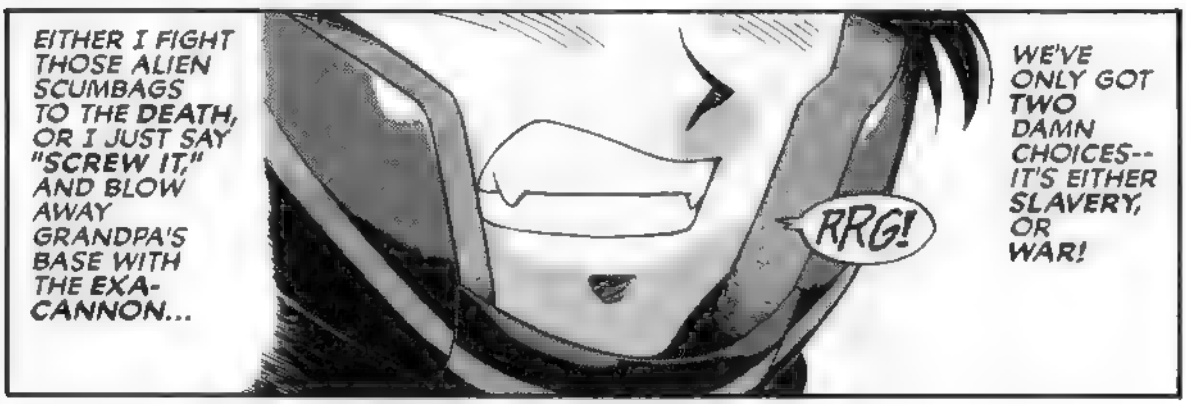
WAY TO GO, KANO! IF YOU CAN ACTUALLY KICK 'FALDIE ASS, THEN KICK 'EM ALL THE WAY!
BUT... WE DON'T KNOW IF HE CAN WIN...!
HEY, KANO! THAT FRICKIN' EMP OF YOURS FRIED MY HARD DRIVE! WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT IT?
ON THE NEWS, THEY SAY YOU'VE CAUSED 500 MILLION YEN WORTH OF DAMAGE WITH THAT "EXAXXION" THING OF YOURS!
DO YOU EVEN KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE YOU'VE MAIMED AND KILLED...?
.....
.....
HOW MANY INNOCENTS GOT KILLED WHEN YOU CRUSHED THAT FREEWAY WITH YOUR ROBOT'S FEET, HUH?
MY PARENTS DIED WHEN YOU BLEW UP MOUNT FUJI!
THAT WASN'T ME, DAMN IT! THE RIOFALDIANS' CANNON DID THAT!
GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT, WILL YA?


STUDENTS! GET BACK IN YOUR SEATS... OR...OR I'LL CALL A DRONE TROOPER!
SCREW YOUR FASCIST CRAP, YOU ALIEN BASTARD!
YOU DOWN THERE! TAKE OFF THAT RIDICULOUS SUIT AND REPORT TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE!
HOICHI, HONEY... WAVE TO ME, WON'T YOU? ❤
Y-YOU'RE A MASS MURDER-ER...!

YO, KANO! LET ME PILOT EXAXXION!
BETCHA I WOULDN'T SCREW UP LIKE YOU HAVE!

JUST GIVE THAT STUPID ROBOT TO THE RIOFAL-DIANS!
I DON'T WANT YOUR STUPID WAR ...!

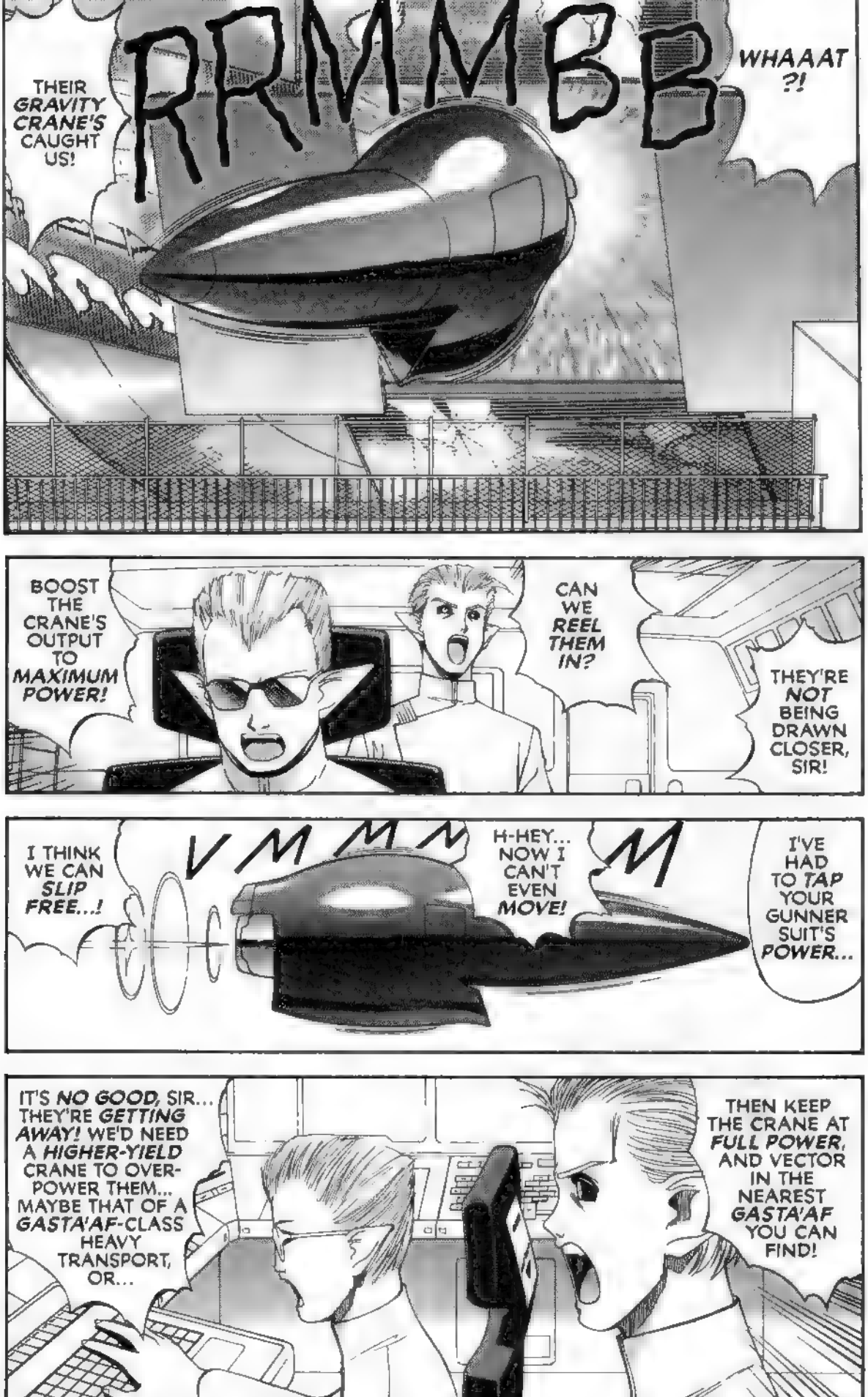

YEAH, RIGHT, MURATA...IF I STEP DOWN, THAT OLD BASTARD WILL JUST GET SOMEONE WHO DOES EXACTLY WHAT HE SAYS...
...AND HE'D DAMN SURE NEVER LET ME GIVE EXAXXION TO THE RIOFAL-DIANS.


EITHER I FIGHT THOSE ALIEN SCUMBAGS TO THE DEATH, OR I JUST SAY "SCREW IT," AND BLOW AWAY GRANDPA'S BASE WITH THE EXA-CANNON...
RRG!
WE'VE ONLY GOT TWO DAMN CHOICES-- IT'S EITHER SLAVERY, OR WAR!

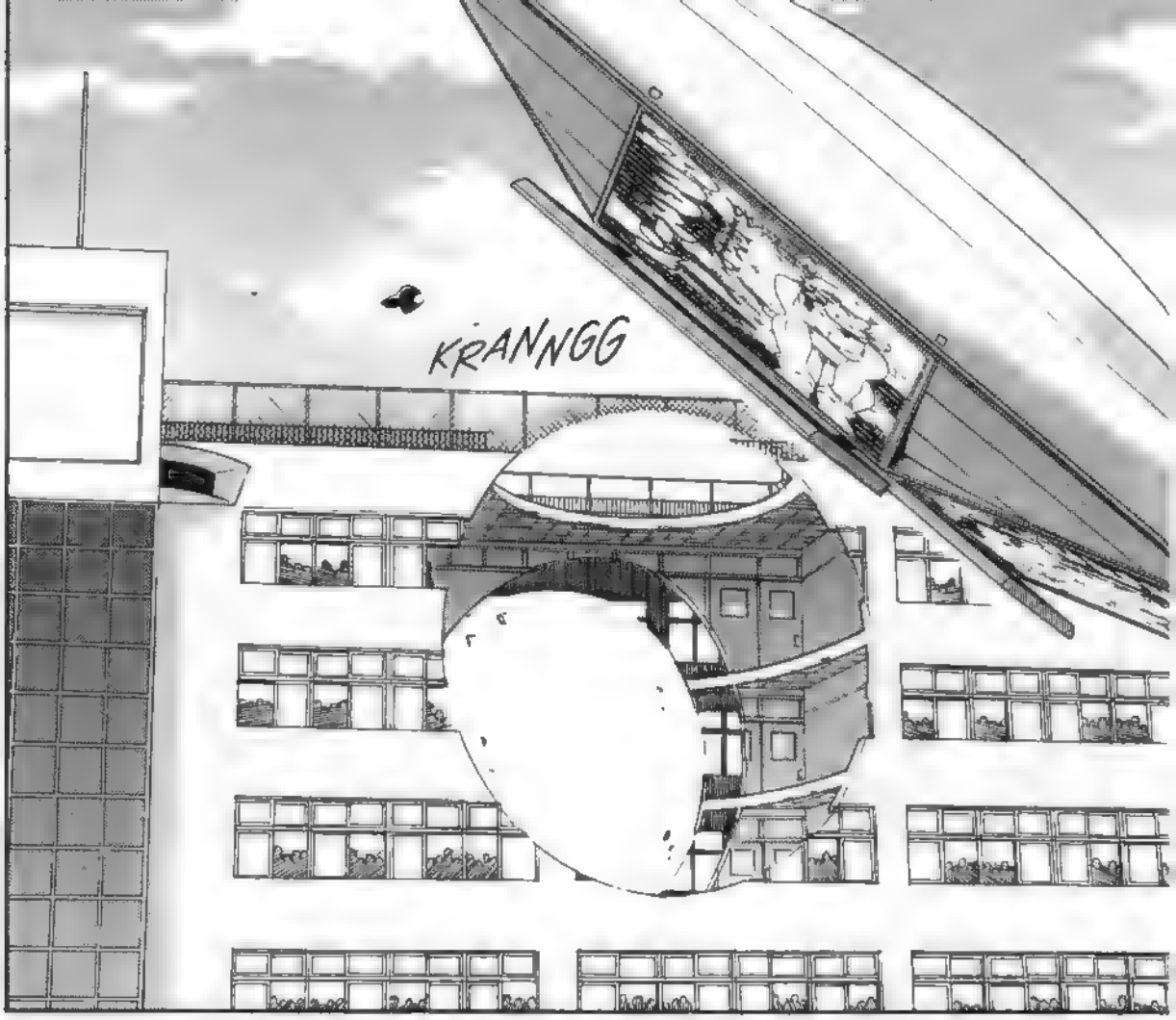
A RIOFALDIAN SHIP IS INBOUND, MASTER HOICHI! WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE IMMEDIATELY!
EXAXXION
!!
RRRMMMMBBB

HUH? BUT... IT'S JUST A CFO, ISN'T IT?
THEY DOUBLE AS FREIGHT-ERS, YOU SEE...
RRRMMMBB
...WITH HIGH-YIELD GRAVITY CRANES!
WHOOSH
VERY DANGER-OUS, I'M AFRAID.
LET'S GO, SHALL WE?
WHOA ...!
THNKK
W-WAIT A MINUTE--!
PSHNKK
NOW, MASTER HOICHI!
VREEEEE

IF WE DON'T GET OUT OF ITS EFFECTIVE RANGE, WE'LL BE--
FSHOOM
HEY, DON'T FRICKIN' CRUSH ME--!
SHREEE
KCHUNGG
AXX
?!
ISAKA! WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG?
VMMMM
SKREEEEK

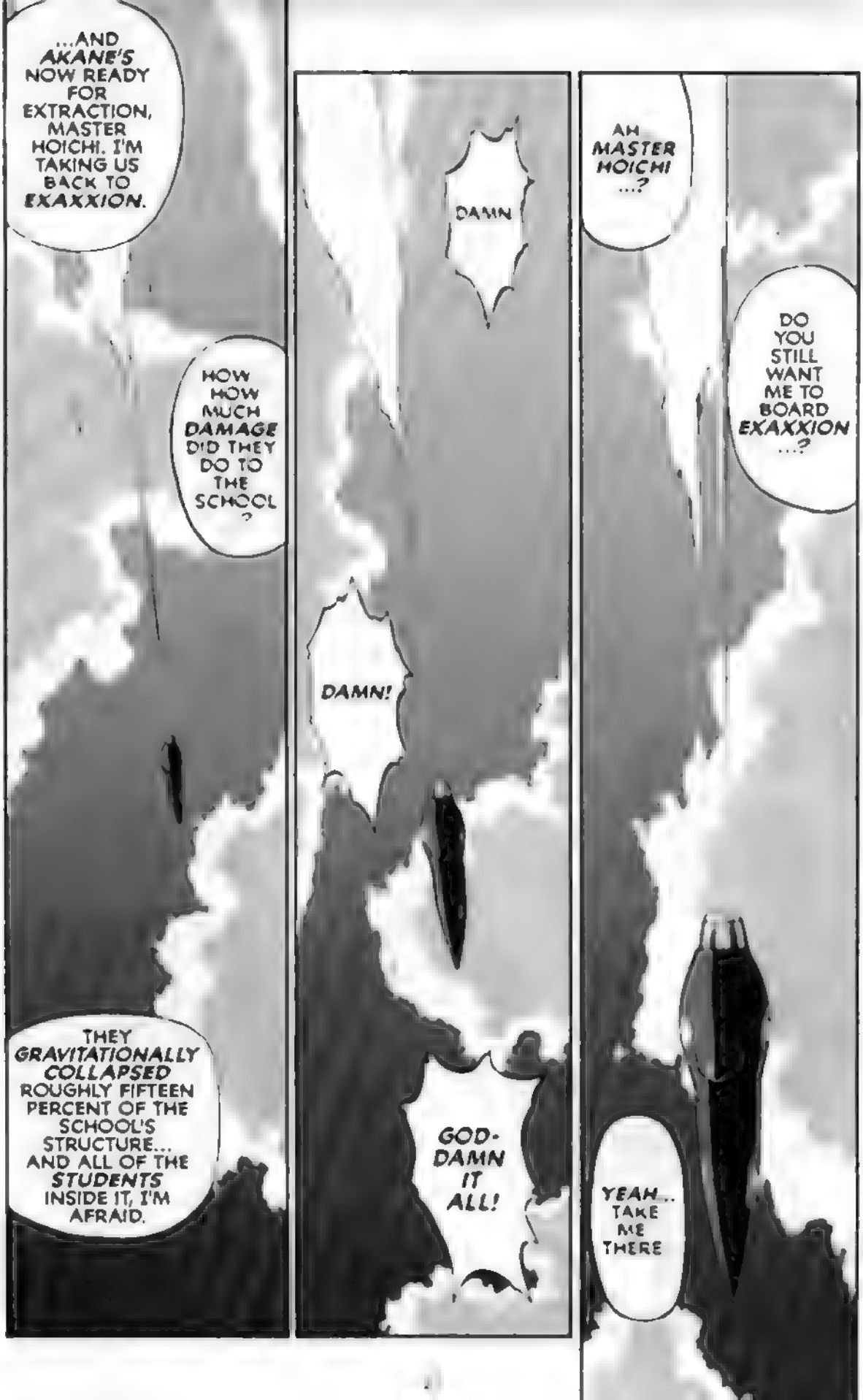

RRMMBB
THEIR GRAVITY CRANE'S CAUGHT US!
WHAAAT ?!
BOOST THE CRANE'S OUTPUT TO MAXIMUM POWER!
CAN WE REEL THEM IN?
THEY'RE NOT BEING DRAWN CLOSER, SIR!
I THINK WE CAN SLIP FREE...!
VMMM
H-HEY... NOW I CAN'T EVEN MOVE!
M
I'VE HAD TO TAP YOUR GUNNER SUIT'S POWER...
IT'S NO GOOD, SIR... THEY'RE GETTING AWAY! WE'D NEED A HIGHER-YIELD CRANE TO OVER-POWER THEM... MAYBE THAT OF A GASTA'AF-CLASS HEAVY TRANSPORT, OR...
THEN KEEP THE CRANE AT FULL POWER, AND VECTOR IN THE NEAREST GASTA'AF YOU CAN FIND!

SURRENDER AT ONCE, HOICHI KANO! ATTEMPTING TO ESCAPE IS FUTILE!
IF YOU CONTINUE RESISTING, WE'LL ATTACK YOUR SCHOOL!
AND WE'LL CONTINUE ATTACKING IT UNTIL YOU SUBMIT TO US!
ISAKA! DID YOU HEAR WHAT HE SAID--?
YES, BUT MASTER HOSUKE'S ORDERS FORBID ME FROM SURRENDERING... I'M GETTING US OUT OF HERE!
LISTEN TO ME! DON'T--
SIR...IF I RELEASE THE FOCUS FROM THAT VEHICLE, THEY'LL GET AWAY...
SHIFT THE CRANE'S FOCUS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING, AND LOCK ONTO IT AT FULL POWER!
THEY'RE GOING TO, ANY-WAY!
BUT WE'LL SEE IF CRUSHING HIS SCHOOL AND HIS CLASS-MATES HAS AN EFFECT ON THE PILOT...!
!!!
SKRAK


KRANNGG

OH, SHIT-- THE SCHOOL !!
THE CRANE'S RELEASED US! WE'RE FREE!

STOP, ISAKA! IF WE RUN AWAY, THEY'LL JUST--
FSHOOOH
IT WOULD TAKE EXAXXION'S WEAPONRY TO SHOOT THAT CFO DOWN...


...AND AKANE'S NOW READY FOR EXTRACTION, MASTER HOICHI. I'M TAKING US BACK TO EXAXXION.
HOW HOW MUCH DAMAGE DID THEY DO TO THE SCHOOL?
THEY GRAVITATIONALLY COLLAPSED ROUGHLY FIFTEEN PERCENT OF THE SCHOOL'S STRUCTURE... AND ALL OF THE STUDENTS INSIDE IT, I'M AFRAID.
DAMN
DAMN!
GOD-DAMN IT ALL!
AH MASTER HOICHI ...?
DO YOU STILL WANT ME TO BOARD EXAXXION ...?
YEAH... TAKE ME THERE

FWOOSH
PSHNK
VWIPP

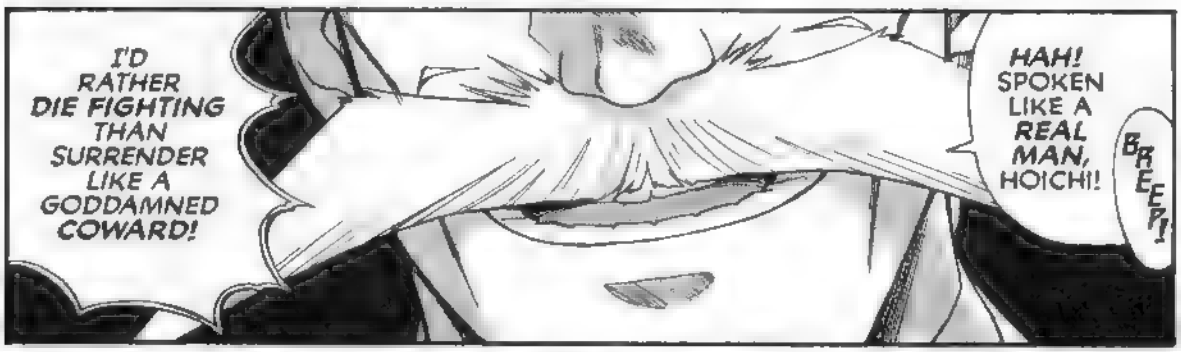
I'LL DO IT.
AH... PARDON?
EXAXXION

I KNOW YOU'RE LISTENING IN, GRANDPA! I'LL DO IT, ALL RIGHT?

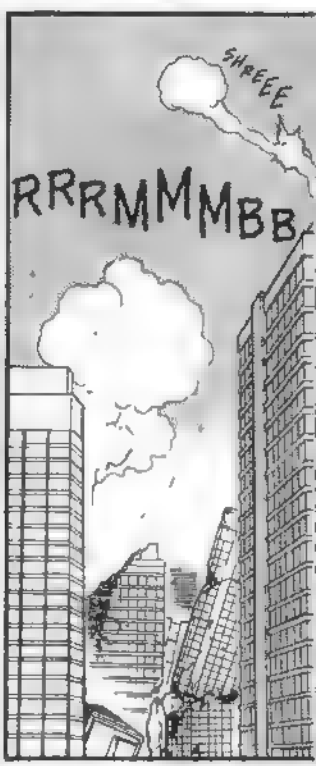
I'LL TAKE THOSE FREAKIN' ALIENS BY STORM! I'LL MACHINE-GUN 'EM WITH THE EXA-CANNON!

SO, MY BOY...NOW YOU'VE SEEN WHAT AN OCCUPATION IS REALLY LIKE, HAVEN'T YOU? IT'S NOT JUST A CLEAN, CASUALTY-FREE REGIME CHANGE, IS IT...?
YEAH, YEAH, WHAT-EVER!!

SCREW BEING A GOOD GUY! SCREW BEING A GODDAMN HERO!
I'M GOING TO CRUSH THOSE BASTARDS LIKE ROACHES! THEIR BASES, THEIR ELEVATOR, THEIR ROBOTS... I'LL DESTROY IT ALL!


I'D RATHER DIE FIGHTING THAN SURRENDER LIKE A GODDAMNED COWARD!
HAH! SPOKEN LIKE A REAL MAN, HOICHI!
BEEEP!

THAT WAS A GOOD CALL, LETTING THE 'FALDIES CRUSH HIS OLD SCHOOL ...!
SIR! WE'RE PICKING UP A SIGNAL FROM EXAXXION! ISAKA'S SUBUNIT HAS CLEANSED ALL THE RIOFALDIAN VIRUSES FROM THE OPERATING SYSTEM...AND EXAXXION HAS NOW NEUTRALIZED ALL ENEMY AIRCRAFT IN THE AREA WITH AN EMP BURST!


SHREEE
RRRMMMBB

WE'VE FREED AKANE FROM THE RIOFALDIAN'S NANOMACHINES, JUST LIKE IN THE SIMULATIONS...!
AND ALL OF EXAXXION'S CONTROL FUNCTIONS ARE FULLY RESTORED, AS WELL...!
ARE... ARE YOU SERIOUS...? IS SHE REALLY OKAY...?
FSHAK
PLEASE... SEE FOR YOURSELF.
NOW BOARDING ...!
WHOOSH
!!
FWSHH

TO BE CONTINUED...!

3.7
PART ONE
CANNON BOO! EXAXION! STAGE 3.7

WHAT? YOU WON'T GO...?
4096
EVANGELION
BUT... WHY NOT, AKANE ...?
WELL... I WAS JUST, UM, MERGED WITH ISAKA...
AH. . "MERGED" ...?
YES. OUR MINDS, EVEN OUR THOUGHTS, WERE BLENDED... AND NOW I KNOW SO MUCH MORE THAN I DID BEFORE...!
NOW, I REALLY UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH DANGER YOU'RE IN, GUN... OPENING THE COCKPIT HATCH TO LET ME OUT WOULD BE TERRIBLY RISKY, WOULDN'T IT?
BESIDES, AREN'T I BETTER OFF IN HERE, HIDDEN BEHIND THE BEST DEFENSES ON EARTH...?
NO!
I'LL GET YOU OUTTA HERE, TO A SAFER PLACE--
WHAT PLACE IS SAFE, GUN?!

THE RIOFALDIANS SNATCHED ME FROM *YOUR OWN HOUSE!*
WHER-EVER I GO TURNS OUT TO BE A DANGER-OUS PLACE ...!
OH ...!
HUH ...?
OH, NO... M-*MOM* AND *DAD!*
THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN *ARRESTED,* TOO!
ISAKA ...?!
YES, MASTER HOICHI...I ALREADY *CHECKED* ON THEM BEFORE WE REBOARDED EXAXXION.
MISS AKANE'S PARENTS ARE *INDEED* UNDER ARREST, BUT REMAIN UNHARMED AT THE PRESENT.
THEY'RE BEING HELD AT THE RIOFALDIAN'S *PUBLIC SECURITY CENTER,* BUILDING TWO.
OH ...?

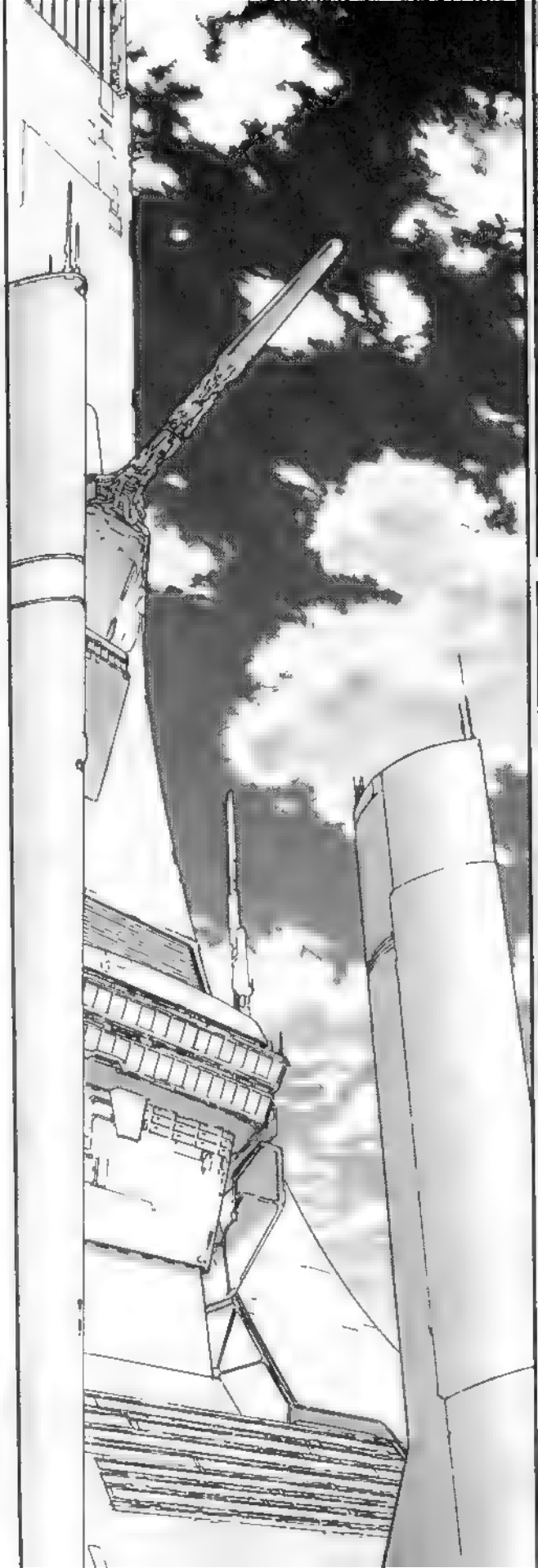
G-GUN! YOU HAVE TO GO RESCUE THEM!
UH...RIGHT! WE'LL TAKE EVERYONE BACK TO GRANDPA'S SECRET BASE, THEN!
YOU HEARD ME, GRANDPA?
I'M YOUR DAMN FATHER, REMEMBER?!
AND FORGET IT! WE DON'T HAVE ANY TIME FOR SUCH DISTRACTIONS!
SOMETHING'S UP WITH THE 'FALDIES ORBITAL ELEVATOR!
THE BUGGERS JUST ROLLED OUT SOMETHING FROM THEIR BIGGEST ORBITAL PLANT UP THERE...
...AND THAT ASSEMBLY LINE'S BEEN DRAWING ENERGY LIKE CRAZY, SO THEY WERE DEFINITELY BUILDING SOMETHING HEAVY DUTY!
SKRKK
THE BEST INTEL WE HAVE INDICATES THAT THEY WERE ASSEMBLING AN ANTI-EXAXXION WEAPONS SYSTEM!
YOU HAVE TO BRING DOWN THAT DAMNED ORBITAL ELEVATOR WITH THE EXA-CANNON, BEFORE THEY CAN USE IT TO DELIVER THAT BEASTIE DOWN TO THE EARTH!
NO! AKANE'S PARENTS FIRST, DAMN IT!
MXION
EXAN

LISTEN TO ME, LADDIE! THIS NEW WEAPON IS THE WORST THREAT WE'VE FACED SO FAR, UNDERSTAND?
WE GOTTA STRIKE NOW, AND STRIKE HARD!
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT? EXAXXION'S PRETTY MUCH INVINCIBLE, ISN'T IT?
I'LL JUST DEAL WITH THIS NEW THINGIE LATER!
EXAXXION
OH, THANK YOU, GUN ...!
I THOUGHT HE'D WISED UP, BUT THE KID'S STILL TOO DAMN SOFT...!
IDIOT CAN'T SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES...
ISAKA! PREP THE EXA-CANNON FOR FIRING! OVERRIDE HOICHI, IF YOU HAVE TO!
.....
.....

NO... WE'LL RESCUE AKANE'S PARENTS *FIRST*, SIR.
HAHH? WHAT THE *DEVIL* ...?
YEAH! YOU *TELL* HIM, ISAKA!
SHNK
AND PLOT ME A COURSE FOR THAT *PUBLIC SECURITY CENTER*, HUH?
HELMET OFF!
PSHNKK
YES, OF COURSE... MASTER *GUN!*
HUH? I THOUGHT ONLY *AKANE* CALLED ME "GUN"...!
ER...? ??

HRM...THAT MERGE SHE PERFORMED WITH AKANE HINO MESSED HER UP, DIDN'T IT?
THAT SEEMS VERY LIKELY, SIR...HER COMMAND HEIRARCHY'S CLEARLY BEEN SHUFFLED.
BUT ALL OTHER PROGRAMMING IN HER OPERATING SYSTEM REMAINS NORMAL AND ERROR-FREE.
AND BECAUSE OF THE HACKING ATTEMPT, EXAXXION'S CURRENTLY SET TO ONLY RESPOND TO ISAKA'S COMMAND INPUTS FROM INSIDE THE COCKPIT...WE CAN'T PERFORM A REMOTE OVERRIDE!
SIR...? WE COULD CRASH ISAKA'S OPERATING SYSTEM--
BAD IDEA, SIERRA! THAT WOULD LEAVE EXAXXION PERMANENTLY LOCKED INTO AUTODEFENSE MODE!
HMM...I THOUGHT THAT AKANE MIGHT HAVE A CRUSH ON MASTER HOICHI...!
MAYBE ISAKA SHOULDN'T HAVE MERGED WITH HER. THEN...?
BUT CAN YOU TRANSFER AS COMPLEX AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE AS LOVE, JUST LIKE THAT...?
WHY NOT? IT CERTAINLY SEEMS POSSIBLE, DON'T YOU THINK?
STILL...ISN'T IT ROMANTIC? OUR SISTER ISAKA, DISCOVERING LOVE FOR THE FIRST TIME...!
IT IS, IT IS!
IT IS NOT!

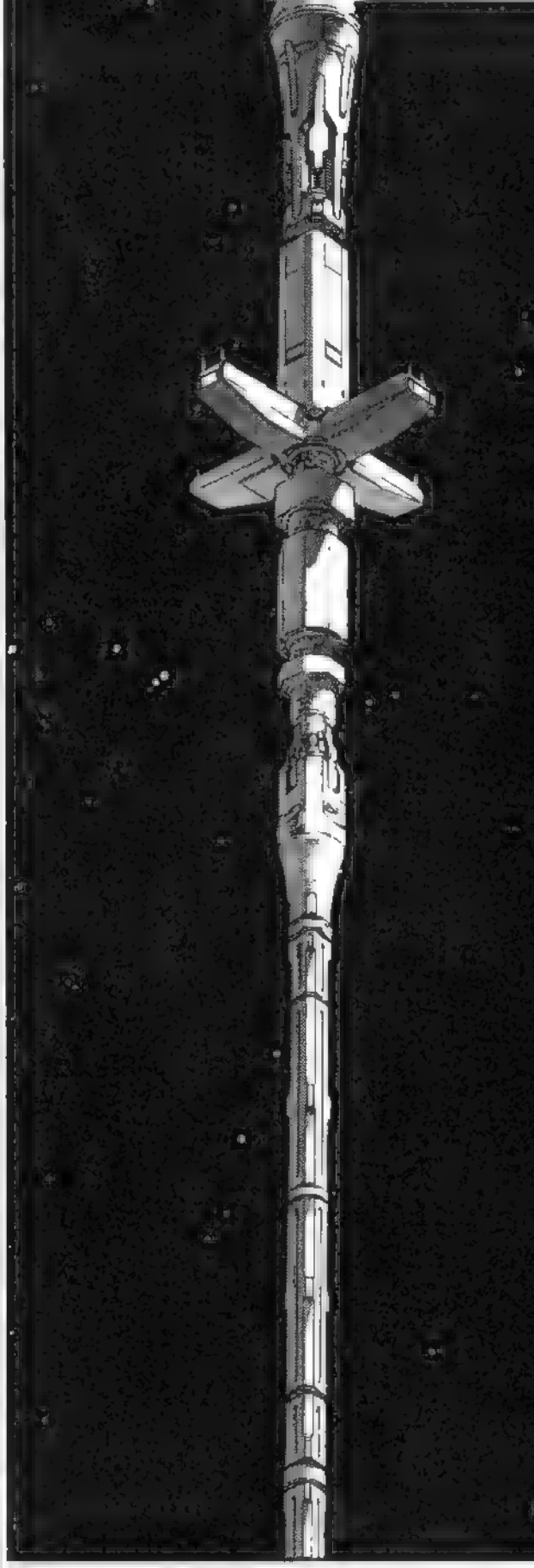
IT'S DAMNED *INTOLERABLE,* ESPECIALLY WHEN WE'RE DEALING WITH A *MAJOR-LEAGUE THREAT!*
I CAN'T LOSE CONTROL OVER HOICHI *NOW...!*
WE DETECTED A *META'AR SIGNATURE* UP THERE, OF THE SAME TYPE AS EXAXXION'S *XXX POWER-PLANT!*
NOT WHEN THOSE BASTARDS MIGHT BE FIELDING *ANOTHER XXX ROBOT...!*



GROUPS D THROUGH F MAY NOW REPORT TO THE ON-BASE LEISURE FACILITIES.

WE REQUEST THAT YOU DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ENTER ANY OTHER SECTORS.
IN ADDITION, ALL PASSAGES TO THE MAIN ELEVATOR BAY ARE CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

HINO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING ...?
"DIARY, RE-CORD."
THE PROFACIANS JUST DECLARED THE MAIN ELEVATOR BAY OFF LIMITS.
VREEE VREEE
A GOOD JOURNALIST RECORDS EVERY-THING, RIGHT?
KCHAK
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE PLANNING TO GO SNOOPING AROUND ...?
DON'T WORRY, OKAY? I'M NOT THAT DEDI-CATED.
EVEN IF I MADE A DISCOV-ERY, WE COULDN'T GET WORD OF IT OFF THIS BASE, COULD WE?
STILL, THIS IS ODD... THEY'VE SHUT DOWN ALL TRANSIT ALONG THE ELEVATOR!
A~D LINE CLOSED
tasco
SOMETHING BIG MUST BE ON ITS WAY DOWN...



META'AR TRANSPORT CASE NOW READY FOR SHIPMENT.

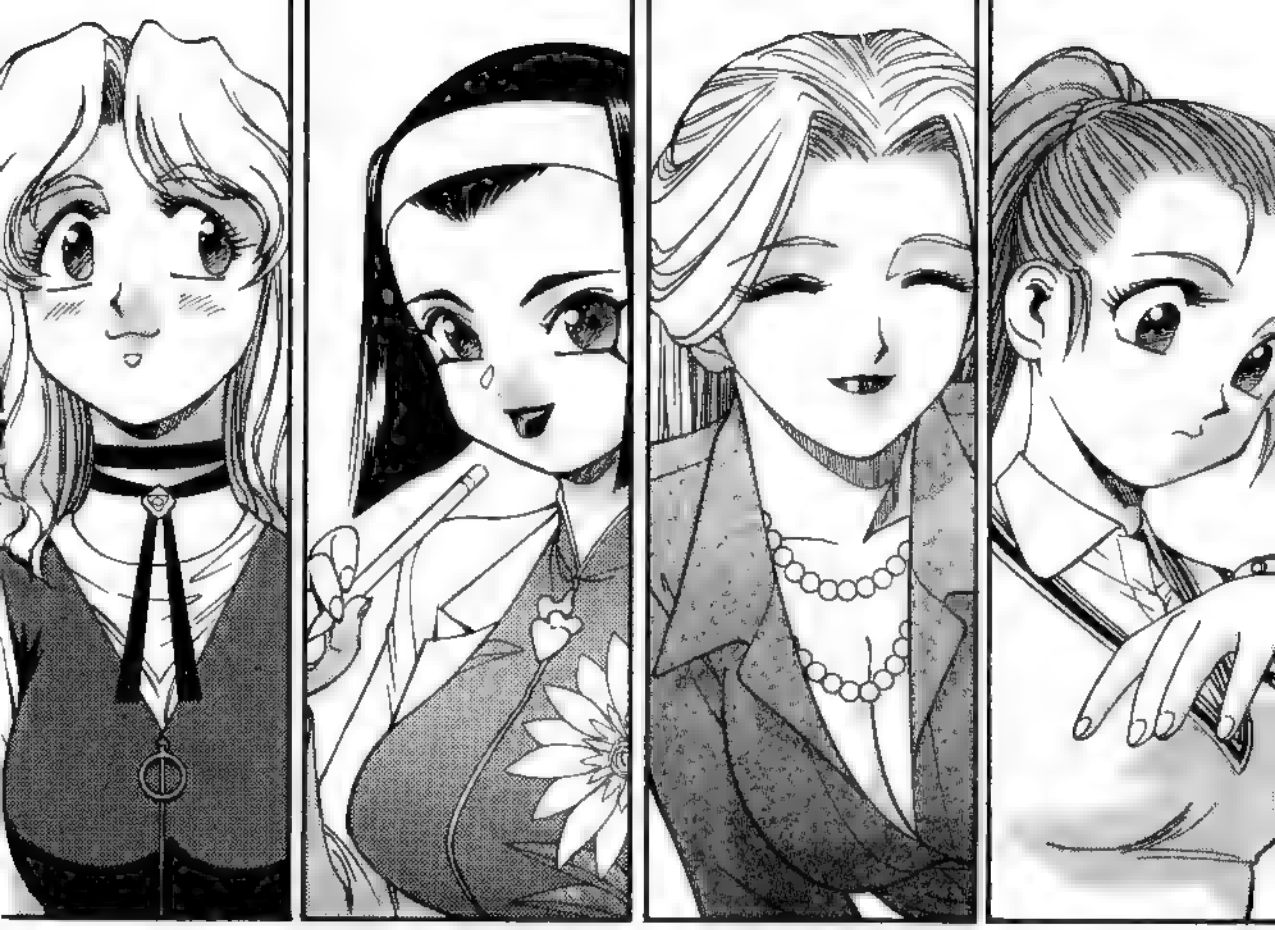
HUH...SO THIS IS THE MONSTER THEY COMMANDEERED *ORBITAL PLANT ONE* TO BUILD?
YES, SIR... THE ASSEMBLY WAS UNDER *GENERAL SHES'KA'S* DIRECT SUPERVISION, NO LESS...AND CONSTRUCTION WAS *VERY* FAST.
NO ROBOT OF THIS CLASS WAS *EVER* PUT TOGETHER IN *THIS* SHORT OF A BUILD-TIME...!
NOW TRANSFERRING TO ELEVATOR ONE...
SO...WILL IT JUST BE SENT DOWN THE ELEVATOR, LIKE ANY *OTHER* SHIPMENT...?
HELL IF *I* KNOW... SOMEONE *ELSE* IS TAKING CHARGE OF THE OPERATION FROM HERE ON.
UH... *WHO,* SIR?
DEPLOYMENT'S UNDER THE *REPUBLICAN GUARD'S* JURISDICTION... THE *PILOT'S* ASSUMING COMMAND, AND THAT WOULD BE *HULAN'KI,* I THINK, OR--
THAT WOULD BE *CORRECT.*

I'M NOW IN CHARGE OF THIS CARGO'S TRANSPORTATION, GENTLEMEN.
COLONEL HULAN'KI SAPA'AS. COMMANDER, REPUBLICAN GUARD.
COLONEL PURU'UB PA'ATIZ.
FIRST LIEUTENANT RA'APU DEI.
THANKS FOR LOADING THE UNIT, GENTLEMEN.
YOU MAY LEAVE THE REST TO ME.
CERTAINLY, COLONEL.
BUT I HAVE TO ASK...GIVEN THAT THIS MODEL IS A TWO-SEATER, WHERE'S YOUR CO-PILOT?

MY PARTNER WILL BE JOINING ME LATER.
AND THAT'S MORE THAN YOU NEED TO KNOW!
FWHOOSH

WHROOOOOME
4098
CANNON

R R M M B B
THE BUILDING'S SECURITY SYSTEM HAS BEEN KNOCKED OUT. AREA ALL CLEAR.
COOL ...!
I'LL GO RECOVER AKANE'S PARENTS NOW.
FSH BOOM
DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT A THING, DEAREST GUN... MY SUBUNIT WILL BE BACK WITH THEM IN A FLASH!
"GUN," AGAIN...? HEY, AKANE... DON'T YOU THINK THAT ISAKA'S ACTING KINDA WELL, WEIRD...?
.....
.....
UM, WELL... I THINK IT'S MY FAULT, GUN...
BECAUSE SHE MERGED WITH ME.



3.7
PART TWO
DANNON GOD EXAXXION! STAGE 3.7

I...I MEAN... NOW ISAKA KNOWS HOW MUCH I... I...
YOU WHAT ...?
I MEAN, IT'S LIKE... UM...
EXAXXION
WHAT IS IT, AKANE ...?
UM, GUN...? HOW DO YOU REALLY FEEL ABOUT ME...?
UH... I...
KLANG
WHOA!
WE'RE BACK!

MISS AKANE'S PARENTS ARE HERE!
ISAKA ...?
YOU FOUND THEM?!
EXAXXION
YES, AND I'VE CREATED SPACE IN THE ENTRANCE SHAFT FOR THEM, RIGHT BEHIND US.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEAK WITH THEM?
VREEEP
AKANE ...?!
OH, AKANE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
IS THAT HOICHI KANO WITH YOU...?
UH... HI, MRS. HINO...
HOICHI! WERE ALL THOSE THINGS WE SAW ON TV ACTUALLY TRUE?!
AH, HONEY, MAYBE THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO--
YOU'RE THAT BOY IN THE BLACK SUIT, AREN'T YOU?
YOU MUR-DERED THAT PREGNANT WOMAN AND HER--

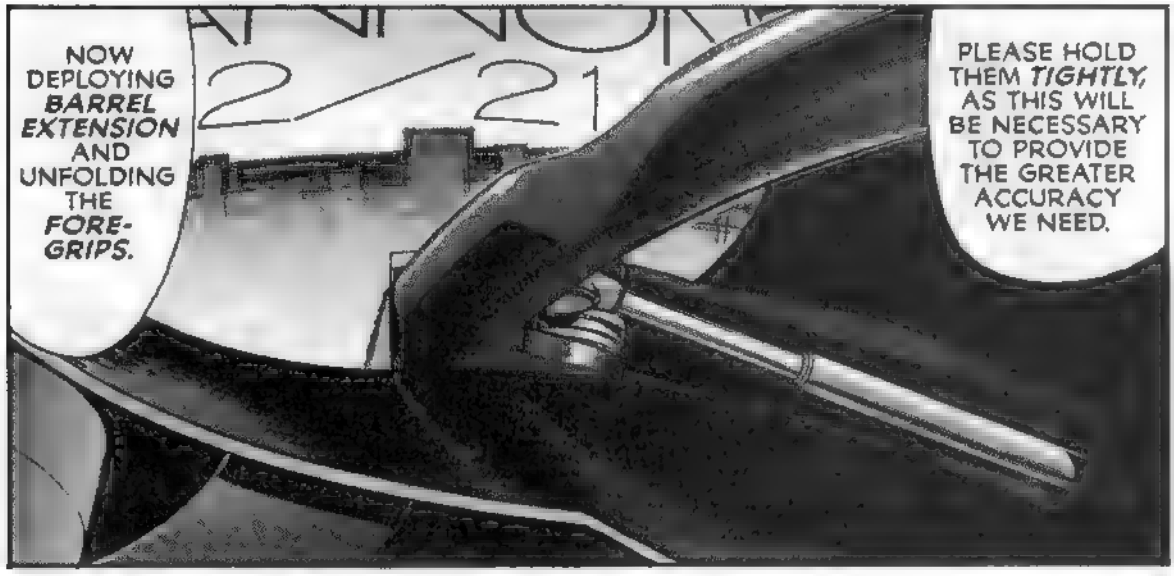
THAT'S NOT TRUE, MOM!
THE RIO-FALDIANS FAKED THAT FOOTAGE!
HOSUKE LABS
AKANE! WHERE ARE YOU?
AND WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WE'VE BEEN WORRIED SICK! I'M TIRED OF THIS INSOLENT BEHAVIOUR OF YOURS, YOUNG WOMAN! I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT--
BEEP!
HOICHI! I NEED YOU TO BLAST THAT DAMNED ORBITAL ELEVATOR RIGHT OFF ITS ANCHOR STATION!
HOSUKE LABS
VMMM
NOW!
YOU'VE RECOVERED AKANE'S PARENTS, HAVEN'T YOU?
WELL, THEN-- YOU'VE NO REASON TO DISOBEY ME NOW!
I'LL LET AKANE AND HER FOLKS INTO MY BASE, ALL RIGHT? I GUARANTEE THEIR SAFETY!
SO GO AHEAD AND OPEN FIRE WITH THE EXA-CANNON, LADDIE! AND DEPLOY IT IN FULL-BARREL MODE!

SHOULDN'T WE EVACUATE THE ANCHOR STATION FIRST? WE--
FIRST WE SHOOT, HOICHI! THE DAMN TARGET'S ALREADY EN ROUTE DOWN THE ELEVATOR!
GET EVERYONE INTO GUNNER SUITS AND PREP FOR FIRING!
GUNNER SUITS...? YOU MEAN I HAVE EXTRAS ...?
YOU'VE GOT PLENTY OF NANOMATERIAL ON HAND TO BUILD 'EM, DAMN IT! ORDER ISAKA TO START THE ASSEMBLY!
H-HEY, ISAKA!
GUNNER SUITS FOR EVERY-ONE!
M 35 P TYPE
EEK!
FSHNK
FSHNK
!
FSHNK

I'M UP-LOADING THE TARGETING DATA TO YOU RIGHT NOW, ISAKA... GOOD LUCK!
THANK YOU, SISTER DEAR!
MISS TANEGA-SHIMA!
YES, SIR! I'VE HACKED INTO THE ENEMY'S SATELLITE NETWORK, AND AM NOW READY TO ACQUIRE ALL NECESSARY GUIDANCE DATA FOR A LONG RANGE CANNON STRIKE!
THE COCKPIT'S A BIT TOO CROWDED FOR BATTLE WORK, I'M AFRAID... SORRY!
ISAKA! W-WAIT--
PSHFT
HAVE A PLEASANT REUNION WITH YOUR PARENTS, DEAR.
AKANE HINO! YOUR MOTHER WOULD LIKE A WORD WITH YOU...!
A "PLEASANT REUNION," SHE SAYS.
Y-YOU AREN'T HURT, ARE YOU, HONEY ...?
THE TRIGGER SYSTEM IS SET, MASTER HOICHI!
KCHANGG
PSHFT
CANNON
PULL BACK THE LEVER IN FRONT OF THE TRIGGER GUARD TO ACTIVATE FULL-BARREL MODE.

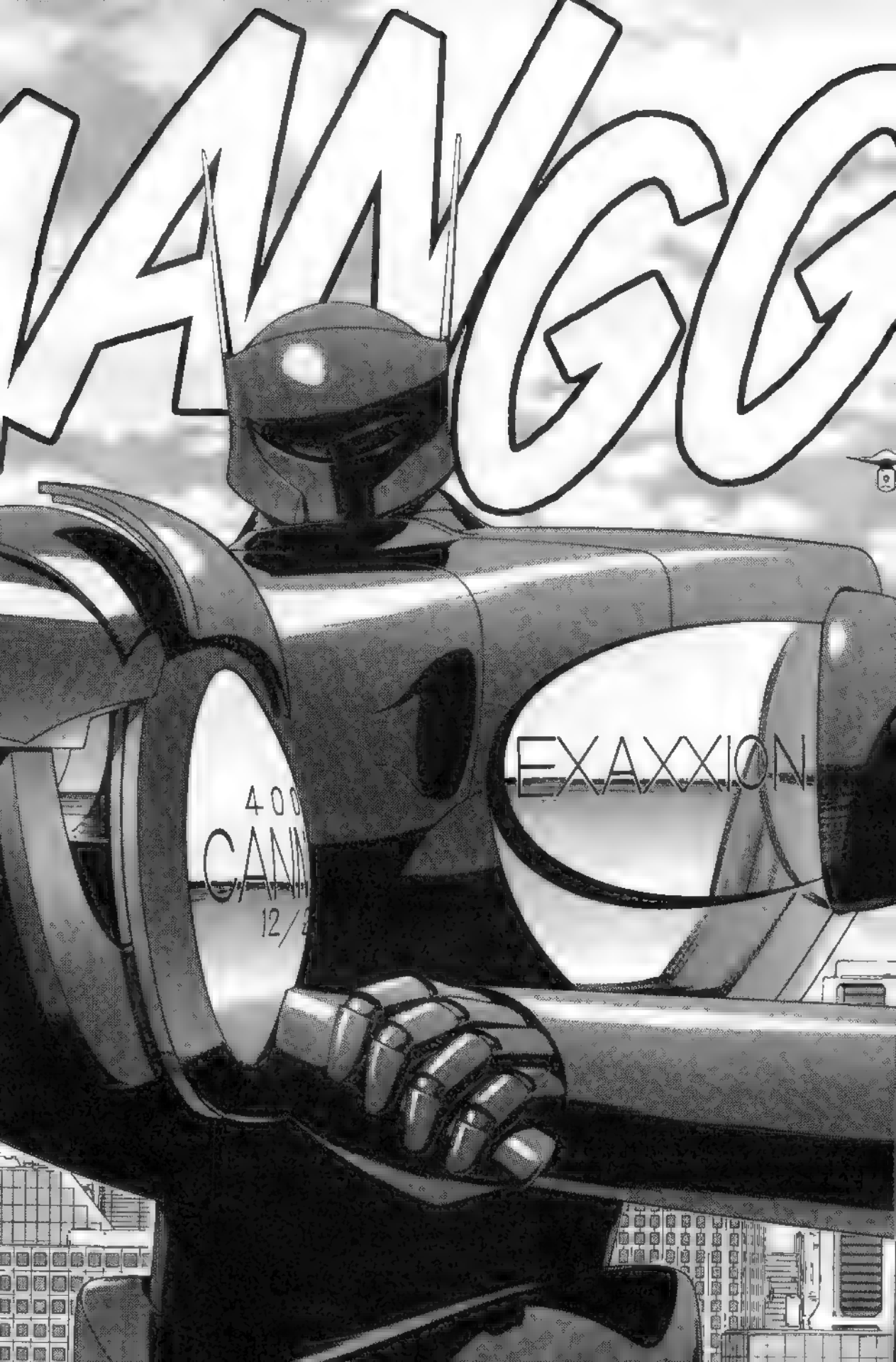
PSHINK
4096
CANNON
12.7/21
KCHUNGG
HEY, ISAKA... WHAT'S WITH ALL THIS "FULL-BARREL" STUFF YOU GUYS KEEP MENTIONING...?
IN FULL-BARREL MODE, THE EXA-CANNON'S BARREL LENGTH IS EXTENDED FROM TWELVE CALIBERS TO TWENTY-ONE, ENABLING FAR GREATER MUZZLE VELOCITIES...AND THUS MAXIMUM POWER.
HOICHI! GET A MOVE ON!
THE DESCENDING CARGO UNIT HAS REACHED MAXIMUM VELOCITY INSIDE THE ORBITAL ELEVATOR'S MAIN SHAFT, SIR!
WE NOW HAVE ONLY A TWO-MINUTE WINDOW FOR DIRECT FIRE ON THE TARGET...
DAMN IT--!
IF ISAKA HAD JUST DONE AS I'D ORDERED, WE'D BE...
KCHAK
CANNON
4096
CANNON
12.7/21
KLANGG
KCHUNGG

RMBB RMBB RMBB
4096
CANNON
12/21
EXAX
PSHTT
FWSHHH


NOW DEPLOYING *BARREL EXTENSION* AND UNFOLDING THE *FORE-GRIPS.*
PLEASE HOLD THEM *TIGHTLY,* AS THIS WILL BE NECESSARY TO PROVIDE THE GREATER ACCURACY WE NEED.

KRANGG
SHNKK
"EXAXXION" IS PREPARING ITS MAIN CANNON FOR FIRING, SIR!
THEN BOOST YOUR MAGNETIC SHIELDING... AND CONTINUE SURVEIL-LANCE.
WHAT? HE'S GOING TO SHOOT THE ORBITAL ELEVATOR ...?!
YOU TELL THAT BOY TO STOP RIGHT NOW!
BUT... WHY, MOM ...?
BECAUSE AOI IS TRAPPED AT THE ELEVATOR'S ANCHOR STATION, THAT'S WHY! OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT YOU HAVE A SISTER...?!
M-35 P-TYPE
NOW COMMENCING FIRING SEQUENCE. GUNNER SUITS-- FULL COVER MODE.
SHINGG
GUEEK!

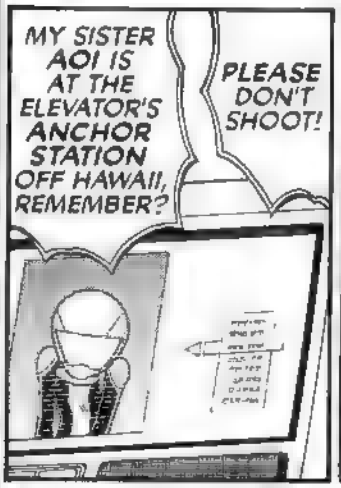
KSHA
CHOOM


EXAXXION

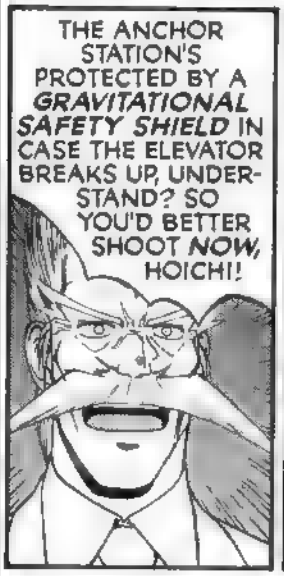
TURN RIGHT, TO 114 DEGREES.
YEAH! LET'S DO IT!
EXAXION
FWHOOSH
CHSSM
KSHANGG
4096
CANNON
12/21
VRRMMM

NOW TRACKING TARGET... YOU MAY FIRE AT WILL, MASTER HOICHI.

OKAY...I'M OPENING FIRE IN--
GUN! DON'T!
SHNG
EXAXIS


MY SISTER AOI IS AT THE ELEVATOR'S ANCHOR STATION OFF HAWAII, REMEMBER?
PLEASE DON'T SHOOT!

WHAT?! ISAKA, IS THAT TRUE--?
THAT IS INDEED TRUE, I'M AFRAID... BUT ACTUALLY, IF YOU OPEN FIRE IMMEDIATELY, SHE'LL BE FINE.
EXAXIS


THE ANCHOR STATION'S PROTECTED BY A GRAVITATIONAL SAFETY SHIELD IN CASE THE ELEVATOR BREAKS UP, UNDERSTAND? SO YOU'D BETTER SHOOT NOW, HOICHI!

OR DO YOU WANT THE FALDIES' NEW SUPERWEAPON TO TOUCH DOWN AT THE ANCHOR STATION WITH AKANE'S SISTER?
SHE'LL BE AT GROUND ZERO OF A BATTLEFIELD IF YOU DON'T SHOOT DOWN THAT BUGGER NOW!

KCHAK
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TO BE CONTINUED IN *SUPER MANGA BLAST!* #41...!

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